

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about Insomnia

Insomnia is the most common sleeping disorder among adults. The National Institutes of Health estimates 30 percent of the general population complains about sleep disruption and daytime functional impairment consistent with the diagnosis of insomnia. Insomnia is defined as difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. People with insomnia usually experience one or more of the following symptoms: fatigue, low energy, difficulty concentrating, mood disturbances, and decreased performance in work or at school. (1,2,3)

Insomnia is characterized based on its duration. Acute insomnia is brief and is often caused by life circumstances and experiences, for example not being able to sleep after receiving bad news or a stressful work day. This is most common type of acute insomnia and tends to resolve without any treatment. Chronic insomnia is disrupted sleep that occurs at least three nights out of the week and lasts at least three months. There are many causes of chronic insomnia disorders including but not limited to the following: changes in the environment, unhealthy sleep habits, shift work, and certain medical disorders (arthritis, neurological conditions, hyperthyroidism, and nasal/sinus allergies). Medications may also lead to chronic insomnia such as those for the common cold and nasal allergies, high blood pressure, heart disease, thyroid disease, birth control, asthma, and depression. People with chronic insomnia may benefit from some type of treatment to help return back to healthy sleep patterns. (1,2)

There are non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic treatments for insomnia. The non-pharmacologic treatment consists of psychological and behavioral techniques. Examples are relaxation training, stimulus control, and sleep restriction. Relaxation training involves teaching a person to systemically tense and relax muscles in different areas of the body to calm the body and induce sleep. Stimulus control is a technique that help builds a desired relationship between the

bedroom and sleep by eliminating activities such work and TV watching. Sleep restriction involves a strict schedule and bedtimes and wake times in order to redevelop a healthy sleeping pattern. (3)

There are many different types pharmacologic sleeps aids available for insomnia, including over-the-counter and prescription medications. Over-the-counter sleep aids can be found at any neighbor pharmacy however be sure to consult with your pharmacist before starting therapy. Major classes of prescription insomnia medications include benzodiazepines hypnotics' temazepam (Restoril®) and estazolam (ProSom®), non-benzodiazepine hypnotic's zolpidem (Ambien®) and eszopiclone (Lunesta®), and melatonin receptor agonist ramelteon (Rozerem®). (1,4)

Determining the right treatment for you depends on your insomnia symptoms and other possible medical conditions. If you have trouble sleeping on a regular basis, it's a good idea to think about whether any underlying medical issues or lifestyle habits could be contributing to your sleep problems. You should not simply accept poor sleep as a way of life; talk to your doctor or a sleep specialist for help. (1,3)

Resources:

1. Billiard, Michel, and Alison Bentley. "Is insomnia best categorized as a symptom or a disease?." *Sleep Medicine* 5 (2004): S35-S40.
2. "Insomnia." - *National Sleep Foundation*. Web. 15 Nov 2014. <<http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-disorders-problems/insomnia>>.
3. Morin, Charles M., et al. "Nonpharmacologic treatment of chronic insomnia. An American Academy of Sleep Medicine review." *Sleep* 22.8 (1999): 1134-1156.
4. Spielman, Arthur J., Paul Saskin, and Michael J. Thorpy. "Treatment of chronic insomnia by restriction of time in bed." *Sleep: Journal of Sleep Research & Sleep Medicine* (1987).

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The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.