

## Types of Insomnia and Its Prevalence

Insomnia is a lack of restful sleep and is the most common sleep complaint affecting 30% of the urban population around the globe. Of these, about one-third may seek help for persistent insomnia severe enough to cause significant anxiety, distress, and daytime limitations. Young school-going and working population commonly suffer from sleep deprivation, which, when persistent, leads to insomnia. Fortunately, sleep deprivation-induced insomnia can be reversed effectively by behavior therapy and good sleep hygiene. Insomnia is present when there are one or more of the following problems:

- Longer than usual 30 minutes to get to sleep
- Poor sleep quality—broken sleep with frequent awakenings
- Wake up occurs very early in the morning, so the average sleep time is cut short.
- The sleep quality is unsatisfactory, with a feeling of waking up not well-rested.

There are five broad categories of insomnia:

1. **Adjustment Insomnia.** It is the most common form of insomnia. It is sudden in onset, short-term, and severe. It results from life situations that cause anxiety, mental anguish, and stress. This form of insomnia affects 15-20% of adults, making up almost two-third cases of insomnia. Most adults in their lifetime have experienced this type of insomnia at least once or twice. The word of caution is that if one falls into the trap of treating this form of insomnia with sleep drugs, the problem becomes persistent. The good news is that this, the most common type of insomnia, responds well to natural solutions of behavior therapy and sleep hygiene.
2. **Behavior Insomnia of Childhood.** Insomnia in infants and children occurs when the child associates sleep with an action (rocking, holding), an object (a favorite blanket, sucking on the bottle, thumb, etc.) or a setting (being close to parents). Every parent knows how to fix this problem, and the child eventually grows out of insomnia.
3. **Inherent Insomnia of Unknown Cause.** About 1% of the population suffers from this rare distressing insomnia, which may run in families. It is lifelong and challenging to treat.
4. **Insomnia from Sleep Deprivation.** It is the second most common form of insomnia. This insomnia occurs because of disordered sleep habits, which cause persistent sleep deprivation. As can be expected, this type of insomnia is more common in young adults with overwhelming work schedules or busy social lives. Fortunately, this type of insomnia responds well to behavior change and good sleep hygiene.
5. **Insomnia Associated with Medical Problems.** There are many prescription drugs (see below) and medical conditions such as chronic pain or physical discomfort or mental disorders which cause insomnia. This type of insomnia requires therapeutic interventions.

The current discussion will focus on the two most common types of insomnia—the adjustment insomnia and insomnia secondary to sleep deprivation. Both types of insomnia conditions respond to natural therapies of behavior modification and sleep hygiene. To be able to understand the insomnia

therapies, it is essential to become familiar with the science of sleep and the reasons why healthy sleep gets disrupted.