# Sleep problems in one page

What it is

## What is insomnia?

Insomnia is trouble falling asleep or staying asleep that affects how you get through the day. It counts as chronic at 3 nights a week for at least 3 months. About 14.8% of Australians have chronic insomnia.

- Insomnia is trouble falling or staying asleep
- It is chronic at 3 nights a week for 3 months
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The signs

## What are the symptoms of insomnia?

The main symptoms are trouble falling asleep, waking often in the night, or waking too early and not getting back to sleep. By day you may feel tired, irritable or foggy, with poor memory and focus. A GP can assess it.

- Trouble falling asleep at the start of the night
- Waking often, or waking early and staying awake
- Feeling tired, irritable or foggy the next day

Treatment

## How do I ask for sleep therapy, not a script?

Name it: "CBT-I", cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia. Say how long the problem has lasted, then ask which route your GP uses: a plan and a psychologist, the GP's own sessions, or a digital program.

- Ask for a copy of your plan; the GP must offer you one.

Medication

## Is sleeping medicine on the PBS, and what will I pay?

It depends on the medicine: some sleeping tablets are on the PBS for everyone, some only for Veteran Card holders, and some not at all. A PBS script costs up to $25.00, or $7.70 concession.

- Ask, "Is this PBS or private?"
- Ask what each supply will cost before it is filled.

Who diagnoses and who prescribes

## Who can prescribe sleeping medicine?

Any prescriber your state's law allows, such as your GP. The length is the prescriber's decision, guided by a 2015 GP guideline that says treatment should be short term, not more than 4 weeks.

What it costs

## How do I get referred to a sleep doctor?

Your GP writes the referral, and it lasts 12 months from your first visit with the specialist. Medicare pays $155.85 back on a first visit. The specialist sets the fee, so ask what it is.

- Specialist follow-up visits are item 116.
- Specialist follow-up: fee $91.70, benefit $77.95.

Read next


- How do I get help for my sleep? →
- What should I bring to the GP about my sleep? →
- Who do I see about my sleep? →
- The sleep problems quiz →

Find these at haihealth.au/blog/sleep


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