

# Insomnia and sleep disorders

## Novant Health Employer Solutions

### What is insomnia?

- You find it difficult to fall asleep and/or stay asleep.
- You wake up earlier than desired.
- Your sleep is of chronically poor quality – light and unrefreshing.

### Chronic insomnia

- A frequent and persistent difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep that results in sleep dissatisfaction.
- Occurs at least 3 nights per week for at least 3 months. May last for years or even decades.

### Acute insomnia

- Lasts less than 1 month with an unspecified frequency.

### Stages of sleep and REM cycle

- There are five stages of sleep.
- A complete cycle lasts 90 to 110 minutes.
- Most people have 3-5 REM cycles per night.
- Infants spend 50% of their time in REM and adults spend 20% in REM.
- REM decreases with the aging process.

### Sleep and health

- During sleep, your body produces valuable hormones important for growth, fighting infections and repairing cells. These hormones impact how the body uses energy. Studies have shown that the less people sleep, the more likely they are to be

overweight or obese, develop diabetes, and prefer eating foods high in carbohydrates and calories.

- Studies show that not getting enough sleep or not getting quality sleep regularly increases your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and other conditions.
- Persons with sleep problems report higher levels of depressed mood, anxiety, physical pain and discomfort, and cognitive deficiencies.

### Options for managing insomnia or sleep disorders

- Breathing exercises
- Sleep log and sleep hygiene review
- Relaxation training or progressive muscle relaxation technique
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Guided imagery
- Cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I)
- Short-term medication therapy (only in select cases in conjunction with CBT- I)
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved pharmacologic therapy for short-term use (4-5 weeks). If insomnia does not improve after 7-10 days, the patient should be further evaluated.

**“Your future depends on your dreams, so go to sleep.”**

**- Mesut Barazany**