



Not sure if your sleep problems are chronic insomnia disorder? Contact your healthcare provider for an assessment. Once you've been diagnosed with chronic insomnia disorder, you may have questions about what treatments are available.

What is the best way to treat chronic insomnia?

- There isn't one treatment that works for everyone, but the [2025 guidelines](#) recommend [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia \(CBT-I\)](#). This means CBT-I has been carefully studied and proven to help many people. On the other hand, there is less evidence for medications. Because of this, guidance suggests trying CBT-I before using medication.
- Evidence for the effectiveness of medication is weaker than that for CBT-I. For this reason, the 2025 guideline suggests trying CBT-I before medication.
- Your healthcare provider may consider sleep medication as part of your individualized treatment plan. See the sidebar for a comparison of CBT-I and medications for chronic insomnia disorder.

Why should I try therapy before medication?

- Studies show that CBT-I is just as effective as medications in the short-term, and substantially more effective over time.
- Medications prescribed to treat insomnia can be duty-limiting because they can produce daytime drowsiness that could impact functioning, ability to operate machinery, and readiness for active duty service members. Talk to your prescriber or pharmacist to learn more.

If I can't do therapy or it doesn't work for me, what medications could I try?

- If your provider thinks a medication is appropriate for you, they may suggest a trial of an approved medication to slow activity in your brain, which may help with sleep.
- You may hear medications referred to by their generic or brand name. Before taking any medications for sleep, including non-prescription "PM" labeled products, be sure to discuss the possible risks and benefits with your healthcare provider.

Chronic insomnia disorder is a condition involving trouble getting to sleep, staying asleep, or waking up several nights a week that lasts for three months or more and impacts your daytime function.

Treatments for Chronic Insomnia Disorder

Recommended (Strong Support)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I)

Suggested (Some Support)

Daridorexant (Quviviq)

Lemborexant (DayVigo)

Suvorexant (Belsomra)

Doxepin (Silenor)

Eszopiclone (Lunesta)

Zaleplon

Zolpidem (Ambien, Ambien CR, Edluar)

Suggested Against (Potential Harm May Outweigh Potential Benefit)

Antipsychotic drugs

Benzodiazepines

Diphenhydramine (active ingredient in Benadryl®; also found in Tylenol PM®, Advil PM®, ZZZQuil®, etc.)

Trazodone



Can herbal supplements treat chronic insomnia disorder?

No, herbal supplements are not suggested or recommended to treat chronic insomnia disorder. Chamomile, melatonin, passionflower, saffron, and valerian are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and could be unsafe. Kava has been shown to cause life-threatening liver problems for some people. The FDA issued a warning that kava is not safe for human consumption.

Can cannabis and its derivatives treat chronic insomnia disorder?

No, cannabis and its derivatives are not FDA-approved and are not suggested to treat chronic insomnia disorder. In addition, its use may have legal implications for active duty service members and federal employees.

Resources



Military OneSource provides 24/7 support and information on housing, financial, legal, medical, and psychological services.

- CONUS: 800-342-9647
- OCONUS and collect options available at: militaryonesource.mil



988 provides free and confidential support for individuals in crisis. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988.

988lifeline.org



Military/Veterans Crisis Line provides free, confidential resource for those in crisis that is available 24/7. Dial 988, then press 1 to talk with a counselor or text 838255 for live chat. OCONUS options available.

militarycrisisline.net



Path to Better Sleep is a free CBT-I based course offered by the VA. This course is not designed to replace an individual's health care but can be used to support your care.

veterantraining.va.gov/sleep



Real Warriors Campaign provides resources to decrease stigma, increase psychological health literacy, and open doors to access to care.

health.mil/RealWarriors

Mobile Apps



Breathe2Relax

Strengthening the warfighter's ability to stay mission-ready under stress by teaching diaphragmatic breathing techniques that help stabilize mood and improve focus in operational environments.

<https://mobile.health.mil/Apps/Native-Apps/Breathe2Relax>



CBT-i Coach

For people who are engaged in cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), this free app provides supplemental support and strategies to improve sleep. Find it at mobile.va.gov/app/cbt-i-coach, or your preferred app store.

References

1. Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense. (2025). *VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Chronic Insomnia Disorder and Obstructive Sleep Apnea*. Version 3.0. https://www.healthquality.va.gov/HEALTHQUALITY/guidelines/CD/insomnia/I-OSA-CPG_2025-Guideline_final_20250915.pdf
2. Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense. (2025). *VA/DOD CPG for the Management of Chronic Insomnia Disorder and Obstructive Sleep Apnea – Patient Summary*. Version 2.0. https://www.healthquality.va.gov/HEALTHQUALITY/guidelines/CD/insomnia/I-OSA-2025-Patient-Summary_final_20250205.pdf



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