

# Sleep and why it's your superpower

## Novant Health Employer Solutions

### What is insomnia?

Insomnia is when you:

- Find it difficult to fall asleep, stay asleep, or both.
- Wake up earlier than desired.
- Report the sleep to be of chronically poor quality, light and unrefreshing.

### What is chronic insomnia?

The essential feature of chronic insomnia disorder is a frequent and persistent difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep that results in general sleep dissatisfaction.

Chronic insomnia:

- Occurs at least three nights per week for at least three months.
- May last for years or even decades.

### What is acute insomnia?

Acute insomnia lasts less than one month with an unspecified frequency.

### Stages of sleep and REM cycle

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

### Sleep and health

- During sleep, your body produces hormones important for growth, fighting infections and repairing cells. These hormones impact how the body uses energy. Studies report that the less people sleep, the more likely they are to be overweight or obese, develop diabetes and prefer eating high-calorie foods.
- Studies show that not getting enough sleep or not getting quality sleep on a regular basis increases risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and other medical 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, guided imagery, meditation
- CBT-I therapy
- Short-term medication therapy may be helpful in select cases in conjunction with CBT- I.
- The Food and Drug Administration has approved pharmacologic therapy for short-term use (four to five weeks).
- If insomnia does not improve after seven to 10 days of pharmacotherapy, the patient should be further evaluated.