

What to do

IF YOU

●
CAN'T SLEEP

●
FEEL LONELY

●
ARE ANXIOUS
OR WORRIED



Health
Canada

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What to do

Have you ever felt anxious or worried, lonely, or had trouble sleeping? Sometimes when we talk to the doctor about these problems, we get a prescription for sleeping pills or tranquilizers. Although these medications may help us feel better for a short while, they do not solve our problems.

Medications that help us feel calm and help us to sleep during a crisis are not meant to be used for more than 7 to 10 days. Instead of taking sleeping pills and tranquilizers, try these healthy ideas.

If you can't sleep:

- Make your bedroom more comfortable, keep it cool and quiet.
- Get up and do something else. Then, go back to bed.
- Drink warm milk or hot water before you go to bed.
- Take a warm bath, read a little or listen to some quiet music in the evening.
- Get fresh air and exercise during the day, but remember: exercise before bed can keep you awake.
- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Don't take naps during the day.
- Avoid coffee, tea or soft drinks after 5 p.m.
- Don't smoke or drink alcohol in the evening—it can keep you awake.
- Don't eat spicy food in the evening.

If you often wake up during the night to go to the bathroom and can't get back to sleep, try not to drink very much before you go to bed.

But remember: if you need to take medication at bedtime, it is best to take pills with a full glass of water.

If you feel lonely:

You can spend time with other people by:

- Becoming a volunteer at your local school, hospital, church or community centre.
- Joining a seniors' club at your local church or community centre.
- Taking a course at your local school or community centre and learning a new activity.

You can also call and talk to a different friend or family member every day. You may want to write a short letter to a friend or family member who lives far away. Sometimes, just writing to someone can help you feel that this person is with you.

If you feel anxious, tense or worried:

- Try to relax by breathing slowly and deeply.
- Take a walk.
- Choose an activity you really enjoy doing, like listening to your favourite music, and do it.
- Tell a friend, family member or your doctor how you feel.
- Join a support group so that you can talk more about your anxious feelings.
- Take a relaxation or exercise class, like yoga, at your local school or community centre.
- Take a course and learn how to do an activity, like needlework or woodworking, at your local community or seniors' centre.

For more information, please contact:

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