

Need a pill to help you sleep? You're far from alone, survey finds

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If you struggle to fall asleep at night, you are not alone.

About 28% of Americans say [insomnia](#) is taking a toll on their daily lives, and about 64% say they take sleep aids to help them [fall asleep or stay asleep](#).

"[Chronic insomnia](#) is a dangerous public health problem," said Jennifer Martin, a licensed [clinical psychologist](#) and president of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).

"When left untreated, chronic insomnia can lead to a range of long-term health issues, including depression, Alzheimer's disease, type 2 diabetes and more, and can impact nearly every aspect of your life," Martin said in an AASM news release.

To mark the "shortest night of the year," June 21, AASM took the covers off a new survey about insomnia. It included 2,010 adults across the United States.

Of the nearly two in three taking sleep aids, 23% use prescription medications, 27% use [melatonin](#) and 20% use marijuana or [CBD](#) (cannabidiol). About 37% said their use of sleep aids had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AASM suggested that people who suspect they have chronic insomnia should work with their [health care provider](#) to find the best treatment choice.

Though noting that melatonin can help, AASM said the supplement should not be used to treat adults with chronic insomnia. Melatonin and [sleep aids](#) are not a "one-size-fits-all" remedy, the group added. There are many reasons people have [trouble sleeping](#).

"Developing healthy sleep hygiene habits can help someone who has a mild or short-term case of insomnia, but if symptoms persist into the

daytime and inhibit your quality of life, it's time to seek support from your doctor," said Michael Grandner, a licensed clinical psychologist and president of the Society for Behavioral Sleep Medicine.

Sleep specialists can make an accurate diagnosis for ongoing sleep problems and develop a proper treatment plan for each patient, Grandner said.

The recommended first-line treatment for [chronic insomnia](#) is [cognitive behavioral therapy](#) (CBT).

CBT combines [behavioral strategies](#), such as setting a consistent sleep schedule and getting out of bed when you are struggling to sleep, and cognitive strategies, such as replacing fears about sleeplessness with more helpful expectations. Recommendations developed through CBT are tailored to each patient's individual needs and symptoms.

Martin explained that "[cognitive behavioral therapy](#) can help patients by providing customized strategies for individuals of all ages who are suffering from insomnia," and it can produce meaningful improvements and is cost-effective.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more information on [insomnia](#).

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