

Managing Insomnia

The following information is based on the general experiences of many prostate cancer patients.

Your experience may be different. If you have any questions about what prostate cancer treatment services are covered by your health insurance, please contact your health care provider or health insurance provider.

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Please feel free to read only those parts of the booklet you need now. You don't need to read everything right now. You can always read more later.

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What Will I Learn By Reading This Booklet?

When you have **chemotherapy** (key-mo-ther-a-pee) to control your prostate cancer, you may have **side effects** or unwanted changes in your body. Side effects are different from person to person, and may be different from one treatment to the next. Some people have no or very mild side effects. The good news is that there are ways to deal with most of the side effects. In this booklet you will learn:

- What **insomnia** is
- Why chemotherapy causes insomnia
- Things you can do to manage your insomnia
- When to call your doctor

It is important for you to learn how to manage the side effects you may have from chemotherapy so that you can keep doing as many of your normal activities as possible.

Words that appear in **bold** (dark text) can be found in the “Key Words” section at the end of this booklet.

What Is Insomnia?

Insomnia is a long period of time when you cannot get enough sleep. You may have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep (also called **restlessness**).



Why Does Chemotherapy Cause Insomnia?

It is normal to have problems sleeping during this difficult time in your life. You may have a hard time sleeping because of:

- Your fear and worry about your prostate cancer and treatment.
- Any pain you might have from your treatment or prostate cancer.
- Side effects from the medicines you are taking. For example, medicines your doctor gives to you to help another chemotherapy side effect, such as **nausea** and **vomiting**, can also make it hard for you to sleep.
- Being less active during the day.

It is very important that you get a good night's sleep so that your body has a chance to heal and so that you have energy for your day.

What Can I Do To Manage My Insomnia?

Just as every cancer patient's treatment is different, the way each person responds to his treatment is also different. While one person may have insomnia, another may not. However, there are things you can do to help deal with this treatment side effect.

- Keep a record of your insomnia for two weeks. When do you go to bed? Do you fall asleep immediately? When do you wake up? What wakes you up? Also keep track of what you are eating, drinking, and doing during the day and just before bed.  Are you spending your late-night hours watching TV? Is pain keeping you from sleeping? Share this record with your doctor and health care team so you can come up with a "plan for sleep."
- Make the area that you sleep in dark, quiet, cooler. If your sleep area is noisy, you may try playing relaxing music. Use bedcovers for warmth if you are cold. Wear loose, soft clothing.
- Try to make a regular time each day for when you go to sleep and wake up.
- Stay away from drinks that have caffeine (coffee or tea).
- Do not drink alcohol. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it cause you to wake up many times during the night.

- Eat a high-protein snack two hours before you go to sleep.
- Try to deal with things that may worry you earlier in the day and plan more relaxing activities for the late afternoon.
- Let your doctor and health care team know about all the medicines you take including **over-the-counter** medicines (medicines you buy without a prescription from your doctor).
- Try not to nap during the day. If you have to take a nap, make them no longer than 30 to 40 minutes.
- Exercise at least six hours prior to bedtime can also promote a deeper sleep. If you are not able to exercise, you can try taking a hot bath.
- If you can't sleep, don't stay in bed. Go to another room and read a book or watch TV. Stay there until you feel sleepy. Then go back to bed.
- Speak to your doctor and health care team about medicines you can take to help you.



Plan For Managing Your Insomnia

- What things should you write down in your sleep record?

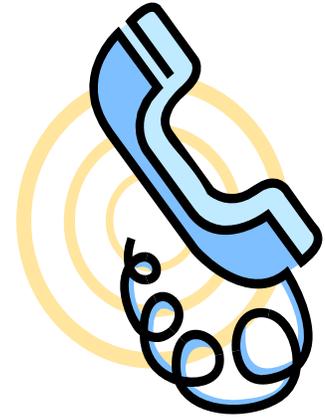
- What over-the-counter medicines are you taking? Make a list of what you take, how much you take, and how often you take them. Show the list to your doctor.

- How do you get in touch with your doctor or health care team if you need help?

When Should I Call My Doctor?

You should call your doctor if:

- You have pain that is not controlled by your medicine
- You have fear and worry that is keeping you from sleeping
- You can't sleep even after trying many different things to help yourself sleep



If you have any of these signs talk to your doctor or health care team. There are medicines and treatments that can help you feel better. It is important that you talk to your doctor or health care team about any side effects you may have during or after your treatment. Your health care team can help treat these problems.

Doctor's Name	
Doctor's office phone number	
Doctor's pager	

What Have I Learned By Reading This Booklet?

In this booklet, you learned about:

- What insomnia is
- Why chemotherapy can cause insomnia
- Things you can do to help manage your insomnia
- When to call your doctor

If you have any questions, please talk to your doctor or health care team. It is important that you understand what is going on with your prostate cancer treatment. This knowledge will help you take better care of yourself and feel more in control so that you can get the most from your treatment.

Key Words

Chemotherapy (key-mo-ther-a-pee): a prostate cancer treatment, which treats your whole body with powerful anticancer medicines to kill many of your prostate cancer cells.

Insomnia: a long period of time when you cannot get enough sleep.

Nausea: an unpleasant feeling in the back of your throat and stomach that may cause you to vomit.

Over-the-counter: medicines you buy without a prescription from your doctor.

Restlessness: trouble staying asleep.

Side Effects: unwanted changes in your body caused by your prostate cancer treatment.

Vomiting: a powerful tightening of your stomach muscles that causes the contents of your stomach to come up through your mouth; Throwing up.