

# WOMEN & SLEEP

Women are often faced with balancing the demands of work, family and household responsibilities, which can interfere with getting a good night's sleep. When women do sleep, it tends to be light and easily disturbed. It's no wonder that sleep problems affect more women than men.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, insomnia affects about 40% of women (vs. 30% of men).

## Factors Affecting Sleep

Many factors can influence the quality of women's sleep. These factors may change as women age. Common factors affecting sleep include:

### HEALTH

- Medical problems
- Medication use (e.g., antidepressants, antiepileptics, CNS stimulants)
- Pain conditions (migraine, tension headaches and arthritis conditions are more common among women)

### LIFESTYLE

- Life events (e.g., loss of a loved one, financial concerns)
- Poor sleep hygiene (sleep hygiene involves practices that are necessary to have normal, quality nighttime sleep and full daytime alertness)
- Stress

## Consequences of Sleep

Research shows that poor sleep and sleep-related problems are more strongly associated with poor health outcomes in women than in men. Not getting enough sleep may cause:

- Increased accidents
- Increased risk of diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease
- Poor job performance
- Trouble concentrating
- Weight gain

*It's important to note that prescription insomnia treatments have not been shown to impact these consequences.*

There are a number of approaches to improve sleep, including lifestyle or behavioral changes and treatment with prescription medication.

*Refer to the "Sleep Tips" for ways women can practice good sleep hygiene.*