



THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY GROUP

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Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Why spend another sleepless night? If you're having consistent trouble sleeping, the sooner you talk to your doctor the better. Prepare for your next visit by reviewing these questions to ask your doctor. You may also wish to review some of the questions your doctor may ask you.

Below are some example of questions to ask in five sleep-related categories. Check off the questions you have for your doctor to customize your list, and then click "print your questions" below. Use the printout as a reference for discussing your symptoms during your doctors visit.

Sleep Loss

- What can I do about stress-related sleep loss?
- Are there certain lifestyle factors that can cause sleep loss?
- Can napping during the day cause sleep loss at night?
- What medical conditions could be causing my sleep loss?
- Could any of the medications I'm taking be causing my sleep loss?

Sleep Problems

- How do I know if I'm not getting enough sleep?
- What defines having difficulty falling asleep?
- What could be causing me to wake up frequently during the night and have trouble returning to sleep?
- How can I tell the difference between a few nights of un-refreshing sleep and a more serious sleep problem?

Sleep Tips

- How can I change my sleep environment to help?
- What lifestyle changes can I make to improve my sleep?
- Are there relaxation techniques that can help?
- How could a sleep medication help?

Over-the-Counter Sleep Medications

- How do these products work?
- Are these any safer than prescription sleep medications?
- Will I feel groggy when I wake up afterwards?
- What are some common side effects?
- How long can I take OTC sleep medications?

Prescription Sleep Medication

- What are the advantages of taking a prescription sleep medication instead of an over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication?
- How safe is treatment with sleep medications?
- Could this medication interact with medicines I'm taking for other conditions?
- What are some common side effects?
- If I take prescription sleep medication, can I become addicted?
- Does the frequency I take a prescription sleep aid impact its effectiveness – or can I take it as I feel is necessary?

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Questions Your Doctor May Ask

There's no sense in suffering another sleepless night. Sleep problems can be treated if you talk to your doctor. In discussing your sleep problems, your healthcare provider may ask you many of the questions below. Review this list before your appointment – you'll be setting the stage for a more helpful, productive consultation.

- Which of the following best describes your sleep problems: trouble falling asleep, trouble staying asleep, or waking up earlier than you'd like to?
- How do you typically feel when you wake up in the morning: very refreshed, somewhat refreshed, or fatigued?
- Overall, how often do you have trouble getting a good night's sleep? Is it every night, several nights a week, once a week, once a month, or several times a year?
- How would you characterize your sleep problem: mild, moderate or severe?
- How long have you had this sleep problem?
- Has your partner noticed anything unusual about your sleep? (Your partner may witness behaviors you aren't aware of, such as snoring or brief awakenings.)
- Have you had any recent changes in your life? Have you had any recent illnesses?
- Are you currently being treated for another health problem? (Be sure to yell your doctor about all medications you are currently taking.)
- What other steps have you taken to improve your sleep?
- What medications, if any, have you taken in the past to help you sleep? (Include both prescription and nonprescription medications.)
- How did you respond to the medications that you have taken?

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