

Deciding if Sleep Medication or Sleep Equipment Is Right for You

Sleep medication and sleep equipment can be appropriate and necessary choices. Talk with your doctor about your sleep problems.

If you are considering medication, talk with your doctor (even if it is an over-the-counter choice). Discuss the drug's half life and toxicity. You will want to use the lowest dosage possible to bring about relief.

Ask about the drug's half-life – this is the time it takes the drug to be cleared from the body.¹ You don't want to be left with "next-day" grogginess.² Talk with your doctor about any and all side effects that the medication may cause. If you experience side effects that concern you, talk with your doctor about other possible medication choices or therapies.

If you have a condition like sleep apnea, you may need sleep supplies other than medication, such as a *continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)* machine, which blows air at a prescribed pressure to help you breathe. Your doctor can prescribe this device or other needed supplies that may help with your sleep problem.



If you have already been using sleep supplies or taking sleeping pills, it is important to talk with your doctor about this choice and the length of time to continue. It is also important to know how to stop taking your medication when you're ready – most medications should only be taken for a short time, and some medications should be stopped gradually.

Source

1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (1998). Tossing and turning no more: How to get a good night's sleep [on-line]. Retrieved August 5, 2008. From http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1998/498_sleep.html.
2. Mayo Clinic (2006). Insomnia treatment: Cognitive behavioral therapy instead of sleeping pills [on-line]. Retrieved August 5, 2008. From <http://mayoclinic.com/health/insomnia-treatment/SL00013>.

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