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Long-term insomnia puts you at risk

Could lead to anxiety disorder

ANXIETY AND depression often bring on insomnia. If you're depressed, falling asleep might be tough; if you're anxious, you might wake up too early and not be able to get back to sleep.

But if you can't sleep for other reasons, could your insomnia eventually cause anxiety or depression? A new study involving 25,130 Norwegian adults offers some clues.

"Chronic insomnia indicates a vulnerability to developing anxiety," says study leader Dag Neckelmann, M.D., of Haukeland University Hospital in Norway. "But we found no evidence that insomnia is a risk factor for depression."

7 insomnia fixes

- Get cognitive behavioral therapy.
- Avoid napping.
- Minimize caffeine.
- Go to bed and get up at the same time daily.
- Use bed for sleep or intimacy only.
- Allocate enough time for sleep.
- Don't go to bed until you're sleepy.

The longer your insomnia lasts — some people in the study had it as long as 11 years — the greater your chance of having or developing a condition known as "generalized anxiety disorder."

That's not all. In a large study of how people function at work, re-

searchers were surprised to discover that long-term insomnia upped the risk of a permanent disability — unrelated to any other physical or psychological illness.

What it means? If you have chronic insomnia, get help. "The earlier you get treatment," Neckelmann says, "the easier it is to treat, and the better your outcome." **W**

— Susan T. Lennon

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