

TIPS: INSOMNIA

I have trouble sleeping. I can no longer sleep through the night, but wake up several times. Even harder, however, is that I have trouble falling asleep. As soon as I go to bed, I start thinking and tossing and turning. Sometimes it's already been two hours and I still haven't fallen asleep. What can help me?

Of course, insecurities continue to pop up: how will this end? How will I get through this? What does the future hold? It's no surprise you are plagued by questions when confronted with a serious condition, such as ALS. We try to provide you with some general tips:

- It is extremely important to have a good mattress (not too soft, not too hard) and a well-ventilated bedroom that is sufficiently dark and not too warm. Avoid any noise that keeps you awake or wakes you up.
- It is useful to have a bedtime routine or some recurrent habits before bedtime, such as brushing your teeth, going to the toilet, placing your clothes on the same chair,... It is important to follow this routine and to go through it at more or less the same time each night.

- Alcohol and meals too late in the evening can cause discomfort that makes it hard to fall asleep.
- You should try to sleep when your body asks for it. It is, however, not advisable to sleep for extended periods during the day. This surplus of sleep will eventually keep you awake at night. It is better to alternate short periods of rest during the day (for example in a relaxation chair) with some light physical exercise (household chores, a walk, a bike ride,...). This way, the need for sleep at night will increase.
- Relaxation or breathing exercises can help relieve tension, for example yoga, autogenic training (a relaxation technique) or progressive muscle relaxation (a type of physical therapy). For more information about these techniques or for a referral, it is best to see your physician.
- Do you, however, continue to have trouble falling or staying asleep, medication can be considered. Discuss this problem with your GP.

Translation: **Katia Ombelets**