



CBTi vs. Sleeping Pills for treating Insomnia



CBTi

FIRST-LINE EVIDENCE-BASED
TREATMENT FOR INSOMNIA



Sleeping Pills

ANY MEDICATION OR SUBSTANCE
USED TO MAKE YOU SLEEPY

First-line treatment for insomnia.

EXPERT RECOMMENDATIONS

Second-line treatment for insomnia.

Designed to fix the causes of insomnia,
including what keeps it going.

HOW IT WORKS

Effect chemicals in the brain. Doesn't address
the underlying causes of insomnia.

More effective than sleeping pills overall. Notice
improved sleep within 1-2 weeks of getting
started.

EFFECTIVENESS

More effective than CBTi in the first week only.
Get to sleep 10-15 minutes faster and sleep for
20-25 minutes longer.

A 6-week program can lead to months
and years of better sleep.

DURATION

Lose effect over time with nightly use and can lead
to taking higher doses.

Prevents insomnia from returning.

PREVENTION

Don't prevent insomnia. Often cause sleep
problems when stopped abruptly.

Safe, with very few restrictions on who can use
it. Can experience daytime sleepiness, reduced
alertness, and slowed reactions when starting
time-in-bed restriction therapy.

RISKS

There are several risks – next-day sedation, memory
problems, confused thinking, impaired driving, loss
of balance, falls leading to broken bones & other
injuries, pneumonia, drug dependence & withdrawal,
and drug interactions and overdose.

For teens and adults of all ages with or without
other health issues. It can be modified to suit
your needs.

WHO COULD USE IT

Sleeping pills are only to be used short-term by
adults and are not recommended for children or
people 65 and older.

A typical CBTi course ends after 6 weeks.

LENGTH OF TREATMENT

A short-term plan (1-2 weeks) can evolve into years
of use with no exit strategy.

Improves well-being, anxiety and depression
symptoms, and quality of life.

OTHER BENEFITS

Early benefits on quality of life can reverse due to
the development of drug dependence and other
side effects.

Available in multiple formats including self-
guided (books, apps, and online courses) and
therapist-guided (online, in-person) programs.

AVAILABILITY

Widely available.
Requires visits to prescribers and pharmacies.

Some health insurance plans pay for some or all
CBTi costs. Cost varies depending on the CBTi
program and format.

COSTS

Most health insurance plans pay for some or all
sleeping pill costs. Personal and health system costs
can be high due to side effects and risks.