Insomnia is a persistent difficulty with falling or staying asleep at night. Behavioral insomnia of childhood (BIC) is a type of pediatric insomnia that encompasses three behavioral disorders: sleep-onset association, limit-setting and combined BIC.

Types of behavioral insomnia

**Sleep-onset association**
Child has learned to only fall asleep under specific bedtime conditions (e.g., while being rocked, cuddled or nursed); most common among infants and toddlers.

**Limit-setting BIC**
Child refuses to go to bed or attempts to delay bedtime with persistent requests ("one more story").

**Combined BIC**
Child exhibits both a reliance on a sleep aid and defiance around bedtime.

Treatment

Most cases of BIC can be resolved with proper sleep hygiene practices that establish a regular sleep-wake cycle:

- Establish a routine sleep schedule
- Avoid stress at bedtime
- Use bed for sleeping only (no games, phone, TV or homework)
- Avoid heavy meals late in the evening
- Restrict caffeine intake 4 – 6 hours before bedtime
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a dark, quiet and cool room

Consult your child’s doctor

Sleep is an integral part of a child’s physiological health and development. To promote optimal health, children 3 to 5 years old need 10 – 13 hours of sleep per day and children 6 to 12 years old need nine to 12 hours of sleep per day. If your child is not getting enough sleep, talk to your pediatrician about treatment strategies.

BIC affects about 25% of children