

# Sleep Hygiene

## Recommendations for a Good Night's Sleep



### Get up and go to bed the same time every day

Get up at the same time each day, seven days a week. A regular wake time in the morning leads to regular times of sleep onset and helps to set your "biological clock".

### Go to bed only when sleepy

Sleep only as much as you need to feel refreshed during the following day. Restricting your time in bed helps to consolidate and deepen your sleep. Excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep. On average, adults require 7.5-8 hours of sleep per night.

### Develop sleep rituals

Protect the last hour before getting into bed for relaxing, restful activities.

### Optimize your sleep environment

Keep the room dark for sleeping. If needed, consider light-blocking curtains, room-darkening shades, or eye covers. Insulate the bedroom against sensations that disturb sleep. For irritating noises, carpeting, insulated curtains, and closing the door may help. Ear plugs or a white noise source (fan, air conditioning, or white noise machine) may be other solutions. Keep the room temperature moderate. Excessively warm rooms may disturb sleep.

## about sleep

Sleep is a period of rest for the brain and the body. However, it is not lost time. It is a time for the brain and body to be restored and rejuvenated. Sleep is essential for energy, learning, memory, growth, preventing illness and overall health and wellbeing.

Nearly everyone needs between 7 and 9 hours of quality sleep each night for good health.

### Don't take your worries and responsibilities to bed

Do not take problems to bed. If necessary, plan some time earlier in the evening for processing your thoughts or planning the next day's activities. Taking 15-30 minutes to make a "worry list" after dinner may prove helpful in relieving some concerning thoughts during the night.

### If you can't fall asleep to the point of becoming frustrated, get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy

Do not remain in bed if you feel frustrated about having difficulty falling asleep. Trying harder and harder to fall asleep often makes the problem worse. Instead, leave the bedroom, and do something relaxing. Reading in dim light or listening to very quiet, non-verbal music can be calming. Do not use the computer, do chores, or watch engaging television programs; these activities may be too alerting. Return to bed only when you feel very sleepy and rise at your usual wake time.

### Only use your bed for the three "S" activities

Train yourself to use the bedroom only for sleeping, sickness and sex. This will help teach your brain to see the bedroom as the place for sleeping. Working, watching television, or eating in bed should be avoided as they may create unhelpful associations.

### Do not watch the clock

Do not watch the clock. Turn the clock away from the bed or cover it. Seeing the time during the night can be upsetting and may prevent a quick return to sleep.

### Minimize napping

Napping late in the day, frequently, or for prolonged periods of time may disrupt nighttime sleep. If needed, nap only once, briefly during the day (20-30 minute "power nap"), and before late afternoon.

### Stay away from caffeine, nicotine and alcohol at least 4 - 6 hours before bed

Avoid caffeinated beverages, especially in the evening. If possible, have your last drink with caffeine before 1:00PM. Minimize alcohol, especially in the evening. Although alcohol can help people fall asleep more easily, the ensuing sleep is often fragmented. Avoid smoking, especially in the late evening or during the night; nicotine often disturbs sleep.

### Have a light snack before bed

Regulate eating habits as hunger may disturb sleep. A light snack at bedtime may help, but avoid greasy or "heavy" foods late in the evening or close to bedtime.

### Don't drink too much

Avoid excessive liquids in the evening to minimize the need for nighttime trips to the bathroom.

### Refrain from exercise at least 2 hours before bedtime

Get regular exercise which helps to deepen sleep and promote sleepiness. However, do not perform exercise too close to bedtime; plan to finish exercising at least two hours before bedtime. A hot shower or bath after exercise may further promote deep sleep.

#### next steps

If you're not getting a good night's sleep, talk to your doctor. Sleep problems can lead to a lowered quality of life and reduced personal health. Certain sleep disorders may increase the risk of stroke, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and depression.

To find out how you can get a good night's sleep, talk to your doctor or call Sleep HealthCenters.

visit



### About Sleep HealthCenters®

Sleep HealthCenters is a network of sleep medicine centers that offers a comprehensive solution for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders. To learn more about Sleep HealthCenters or for additional information about sleep and sleep disorders, please visit our website or call us toll-free.

[www.sleephealth.com](http://www.sleephealth.com)  
877-SLEEP-HC (877-753-3742)

©2011 Sleep HealthCenters®  
MKT-SYED-0014-0 5/19/11