

SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS

- **Set your biological clock:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day to reinforce your body's internal biological clock and help you go to sleep and wake up more easily.
- **Get outside:** Get at least 30 minutes of daylight each day to promote daily sleep/awake patterns.
- **Work out:** Exercise, but not later than 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- **Avoid caffeine and nicotine:** Coffee, colas, teas and chocolate contain caffeine, a stimulant, and its effects may take up to 8 hours to wear off completely making it difficult to fall asleep. Nicotine is also a stimulant and can cause users to sleep lightly.
- **Avoid alcohol before bedtime:** Alcohol can deprive you of Stage 3 Deep Sleep and REM sleep and keep you in Light Sleep. It can also cause you to wake up in the middle of the night when the effects wear off.
- **Avoid medications (if possible):** Commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure, or asthma medications and over-the-counter medications for coughs, cold or allergies can delay or disrupt sleep. Consult your physician.
- **Eating and drinking:** Avoid large meals and beverages late at night. A snack is ok, but a large meal can cause indigestion and disrupt sleep, while drinking too much fluid at night can cause frequent awakenings to urinate.
- **Avoid naps after 3pm:** Short naps (no longer than 20 minutes) can help recover some lost sleep, but late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- **Bedtime routine:** Start winding down 1-2 hours before you would like to fall asleep. Create a bedtime routine to help your body prepare - change into bed clothes, dim the lights, read a chapter of a book, try deep breathing exercises.
- **Take a hot bath:** It can help you relax and the drop in body temperature when you get out can make you feel sleepy.
- **Sleep retreat:** Make your bedroom a comfortable place used only for sleep and intimacy. Keep the room quiet, dark and free from distractions. Try ear plugs and a sleep mask. Make sure room is cool, but not cold. Avoid watching TV and keep electronic devices out of the bedroom. The light from these devices can stimulate the brain and keep you awake. Make sure you have a comfortable and supportive mattress and use pillows to help you find your optimal sleeping position.
- **20-minute rule:** Don't lie in bed awake for more than 20 minutes. Get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy.
- **Worrying:** Focus your mind on positive things from your day. Or recall a happy memory to help ease your mind before falling asleep.
- **Deep breathing:** To help with stress, try slow, deep abdominal breathing before going to bed. You can also use this if you wake up in the middle of the night or early in the morning.

See your Physician if you continue to have sleep issues or questions about sleep medications. ^{S1, S2, S3, S4}

REFERENCES

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