Tips to Get Good Sleep

Why is sleep important?

Sleep is important for your mental and physical health. It helps you heal and deal with stress, and a lack of sleep can increase your risks for some health problems.

What are good sleep habits?

There are some things that you can do to improve your sleep. Follow the tips in this sheet to help you feel better.

Develop a sleep schedule and regular bedtime routine.

- Go to sleep and wake up around the same time every day.
- Do the same things in the same order every night before you go to bed, such as:
    - Brush your teeth
    - Wash your face

Try to relax and wind down.

- Take a warm bath or shower.
- Meditate or have some quiet time before bed.

Set up a good sleep environment.

- Make sure your bedroom is:
    - **Quiet.** Turn off your TV and other noises that can disrupt your sleep. If you feel you need a little noise, use a sound machine or fan to help.
    - **Dark.** Turn off any bright lights and use blackout curtains on your windows.
    - **A comfortable temperature.** A little cooler is better than too warm.
- If you have pets that wake you up, keep them out of your bedroom.
- Make sure your mattress is comfortable to you.
- If you watch the clock at night, hide it.

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Avoid things that may affect your sleep.

- Do not drink caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks) after 12:00 pm (noon). Caffeine can keep you awake and may last for several hours after drinking.
- Do not smoke cigarettes.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Avoid medicines that may keep you awake.

Only use your bed for sleeping and sex.

- Do not watch TV or read in bed.
- If you use your bed for anything other than sleeping (or sex), your brain will relate your bed to being awake instead of being asleep.

Exercise during the day

- Regular exercise is important to your health, but should be done earlier in the day.
- Your body makes endorphins when you exercise, which can make it hard to fall asleep, so try not to exercise after 2:00 pm.

What should I do if I cannot sleep?

Do not stay in bed awake for more than 5 to 10 minutes. If you cannot fall asleep:

- Get out of bed.
- Sit in a chair in the dark. Do not watch TV or use your phone while you sit in the chair.
- Stay in the chair until you are sleepy. Then, go back to bed.

If this happens several times at night, that is okay. Just keep your regular sleep schedule.

When should I speak to my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if you continue to have a hard time falling or staying asleep after trying the tips above.

Sometimes big changes in your sleep patterns can be a sign that something else is wrong. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.