

Recommendations for Good Sleep Habits

➤ Have a regular schedule

Get up and go to bed around the same time each day.

➤ Establish a bedtime routine

Your body needs time to shift slowly to sleep mode. Prepare your body for sleep by having a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading or listening to soothing music. Avoid mental or emotional stimulation before bed. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing may be helpful.

➤ Create a relaxing sleeping environment in the room

Your bedroom should be dark, quiet, comfortable and cool. Use white noise (e.g., a fan) to block other noises.

➤ Use your bedroom for sleep and relaxation only

A television or computer in your bedroom may interfere with sleeping.

➤ Avoid eating near bedtime

Try to finish eating at least two or three hours before your regular bedtime. Do not drink large amounts of liquids within 3 hours of bedtime.

➤ Don't nap, especially in late afternoon or early evening

If you must nap, have a "power nap" of a maximum of 30 - 60 minutes in the afternoon. Set an alarm clock to wake you up at a set time, even if you are just resting and not sure if you may fall asleep.

➤ Exercise

The best time to exercise is in the morning or afternoon, or at least 4 hours before bed. Regular physical activity will help you sleep better and help you cope better with stress.

➤ Avoid food, beverages and medications that may disrupt sleep

Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and can disrupt sleep. Although an alcoholic drink "nightcap" is sometimes used to help get to sleep, as your body breaks down alcohol, the waste products can break up your sleep.

➤ Light

Increase exposure to bright light during the day and avoid bright light at night. (If you need to get out of bed during the night, use the minimal amount of light required for safety.)