

Tips for Good Sleep

- **Keep regular sleeping habits.** Try to go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time every day – even on weekends and vacations.
- **Do not stay in bed** to make up for lost sleep or beyond your regular rise time.
- **Set an alarm clock** to wake up at a fixed time each morning.
- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol in the evening.**

If consumed close to bedtime, the caffeine in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, and some medications can keep you from sleeping or sleeping soundly. Stop consuming caffeinated beverages after lunch. Although caffeine remains in the body on average for 3 to 5 hours, caffeine stimulates some people for as long as 12 hours.

Even though alcohol can make you feel sleepy, drinking alcohol around bedtime can disturb sleep. About 2 to 4 hours after consuming alcohol, it leaves the brain tissue, causing stimulation of the brain and resulting in awakening. Stop consuming alcohol at least 3 hours before bedtime. If you are taking opioids (narcotics), you should never consume alcohol.

- **If you're a smoker, try to give it up.** Avoid smoking, especially in the evening. Smoking is stimulating to the brain. When smokers go to sleep, they experience withdrawal from nicotine, which causes insomnia.
- **Time your exercise.** Regular daytime exercise can improve nighttime sleep. But, avoid exercising within 3 hours of bedtime, which can be stimulating, keeping you awake. Exercise every day at least 20 minutes, preferably 4 to 5 hours before bedtime.
- **Avoid daytime naps**, particularly in the late afternoon or evening. Sleeping in the afternoon can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- **Reserve your bed for sleep and sex only.** Watching the late news, reading a suspense novel, or working on your laptop in bed can stimulate you, making it hard to sleep.
- **Keep your bedroom dark**, quiet, comfortable, and cool.
- **Avoid liquids and spicy meals before bed.** Heartburn and late night trips to the bathroom interrupt sleep.
- **Wind down before bed.** Avoid working right up to bedtime. Do relaxing activities, such as listening to soft music or taking a warm bath, that get you ready for sleep.
- **Go to bed only when sleepy.**
- **Do not watch TV, read, eat, or worry while in bed.** Take care of your worries before bedtime.
- **Get out of bed if you are unable to fall asleep within 10 minutes** and go to another room and read relaxing material or listen to soothing music. Return to bed only when sleepy. Repeat this step as many times as necessary throughout the night.
- **Sleep only as much as you need to feel rested.** Most adults function well on 6 to 8 hours of sleep.