

The brain during sleep

- Places the day's experiences into memory.
- Improves the ability to learn.
- The body replaces old cells with new ones.
- The body reenergizes organs and muscles.

Without a good night's sleep

- You make more mistakes.
- May have higher stress.
- Have a short temper.
- Have lower motivation.
- Have slower reflexes.

Bed and bedroom

☐ **Comfortable bedding:**

Uncomfortable pillows or covers make you toss and turn all night. A hard or lumpy mattress can also stop a good night's sleep.

☐ **Room temperature and ventilation:**

Make sure you are *warm*, not too hot or not too cold.

☐ **Noise:**

Sudden, loud noises from inside or outside the home can disrupt sleep. Steady, low sounds like the whir of a fan or air conditioner are soothing because they help block out other noises.

☐ **Light:**

Light is one of our body's most powerful time cues. The rising sun can stimulate the brain into wakefulness long before the alarm goes off. A dark room is the best for sleep, day or night.

☐ **Bed only for sleeping:**

Do not use your bed as an office, workroom or recreation area. Let your body "know" that the bed is associated with sleeping.



Television

Many people fall asleep with the TV on in their room.

- Watching TV before bedtime is a bad idea.
- TV is stimulating and tends to keep people up.

1. We encourage our families to keep TVs out of bedrooms.
2. If you have a TV, decide on the time to turn it off.

Radio:

Some people feel the radio helps them go to sleep. Since radio is a less engaging medium than TV, this is probably a good idea.

Remember: Use the automatic turn off for both your TV and radio so that they do not play all night

Before bedtime

☐ **Keep the same schedule:**

Going to sleep and waking up at the same time each day trains your body. This makes it easier to go to sleep and wake up.

☐ **Limit daytime naps:**

Many people feel sleepy in the late afternoon and take a nap. This is okay but you need to limit your nap to only 30 minutes. Longer naps interfere with your night sleep.

☐ **No caffeine 4 to 6 hours before bedtime:**

This includes caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea, many sodas, as well as chocolate.

☐ **No heavy, spicy, or sugary foods before bedtime.**

Do not eat or drink these foods 4 to 6 hours before you go to bed. This food makes it difficult to stay asleep.

☐ **Exercise regularly, but not right before bed.**

Regular exercise, especially in the afternoon, can help deepen your sleep. Strenuous exercise within 2 hours before bedtime can make it difficult to fall asleep.

Getting ready for bed

- ☐ **Try a soothing snack before bed**
Such as warm milk or foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, such as bananas.
- ☐ **Practice relaxation techniques before bed**
Relaxation techniques such as yoga, deep breathing and others may help relieve anxiety and reduce muscle tension.
- ☐ **Don't take your worries to bed**
Leave your worries about job, school, daily life, etc., behind when you go to bed. Some people find it useful to assign a "worry period" during the evening or late afternoon to deal with these issues.
- ☐ **Establish a pre-sleep ritual**
Pre-sleep rituals, such as a warm bath or a few minutes of reading, can help you sleep.
- ☐ **Handling difficulty sleeping**
If you don't fall asleep within 15-30 minutes, get up, go into another room, and read until sleepy.

If you can't sleep

Most people wake up one or two times a night for various reasons.

If you get up in the middle of night and cannot get back to sleep *within 15 to 20 minutes*, do not stay in the bed "trying hard" to sleep.

What to do:

- ☐ Get out of bed and leave the bedroom.
- ☐ Read.
- ☐ Have a light snack.
- ☐ Do some quiet activity.
- ☐ Take a bath.

What to NOT do:

- ☐ **Do not** perform challenging or engaging activity such as office work, housework, etc.
- ☐ **Do not** watch television.

You will generally find that you can get back to sleep 20 minutes or so later.

Other problems that upset sleep

- 1. Several physical conditions.**
These include, acid reflux with heartburn, arthritis menstruation, hot flashes, headaches.
- 2. Psychological and mental health problems.**
These include depression, anxiety and stress.
 - In many cases, difficulty staying asleep may be the only presenting sign of depression.
 - Please call your doctor if you feel this is a concern. Your doctor can help you find the source of these feelings and decide on the best treatment.
- 3. Medicines**
Many medicines can cause sleeplessness as a side effect. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if medicines you are taking can lead to sleeplessness.

Notes

These instructions are only general guidelines. Your doctors may give you special instructions. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your doctor.