



Your Health: Getting Good Sleep

What does it mean to sleep well?

Sleeping well means getting enough sleep to feel well and stay healthy.

How much sleep is enough may vary depending on the person.

Most adults do best when they get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each day.

But the number of hours you sleep is not as important as how you feel when you wake up.

If you don't feel refreshed when you wake up, or you feel tired during the day, you probably need more sleep.

Why is good sleep important?

Getting enough quality sleep is a key part of good health. And it has major benefits.

Good sleep can help keep your immune system strong so you can stay healthy. It can also help your mood and help lower your stress.

WHEN YOUR SLEEP SUFFERS

If you don't get enough quality sleep, you may feel more grumpy or stressed.

You might also have trouble concentrating and remembering.

Not getting enough sleep can also lead to other problems, such as:

- Anxiety or depression.
- A weak immune system. Your body may have a harder time fighting infection.
- Accidents or injuries.

What can cause sleep problems?

Many things can keep you from getting enough quality sleep, including:

- Stress and everyday worries.
- Depression, anxiety, and other mental or emotional conditions.
- Changes in your sleep habits or surroundings, like having jet lag, working the late shift, or sleeping in a different bed.
- Health problems, such as pain, breathing problems, and restless legs syndrome.
- Not getting regular exercise.

What can help you sleep better?

These tips may help you sleep better and wake up feeling more refreshed. You might start by trying one or two ideas, and find out what works for you.

YOUR SLEEPING AREA

- Use your bedroom only for sleeping and sex. Some light reading may help you fall asleep, but it's best not to do it in bed. And don't watch TV in bed.
- Be sure your bed is big enough to be comfortable, especially if you share a bed with someone else.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool. Use curtains, blinds, or a sleep mask to block out light. To block out noise, try earplugs, soothing music, or a white-noise machine.

YOUR ROUTINES

- Create a relaxing bedtime routine. Try a warm shower or bath and soothing music. Deep breathing, yoga, meditation, tai chi, or muscle relaxation may also help.
- Go to bed at the same time every night. And get up at the same time every morning, even if you feel tired.
- Get regular exercise.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Limit caffeine (coffee, tea, caffeinated sodas) during the day. And don't have any for at least 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol before bedtime. Alcohol can cause you to wake up more often during the night.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco, especially in the evening. Nicotine can keep you awake.
- Avoid taking naps during the day, especially close to bedtime.
- Don't take medicine right before bed that may keep you awake. Your doctor can tell you if your medicine may do this and if you can take it earlier in the day.
- Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime. But a light snack may help you sleep.
- Try to not use technology such as smartphones, computers, or tablet devices for at least an hour before bed.

WHEN YOU CAN'T SLEEP

- Imagine yourself in a peaceful, pleasant scene. Focus on the details and feelings of being in a place that is relaxing.
- If you can't fall asleep within 15 minutes or so, get up and do a quiet or boring activity in another room until you feel sleepy.

USING A SLEEP JOURNAL

As you make changes, you might want to use a sleep journal. You can write down your sleep schedule and what kind of things you did before bed. This can help you figure out what helps you to sleep better and what may get in the way of a good night's sleep.

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