

SLEEP HYGIENE

Guidelines for Better Sleep

The following guidelines can be used for a variety of sleep disorders. They may help many people sleep better. For more specific guidelines on your particular sleep disorder, please consult your physician.

- Maintain a regular wake time, even on days off work and on weekends.
- Try to go to bed only when you are drowsy.
- If you are not drowsy and are unable to fall asleep in about 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and engage in a quiet activity elsewhere. Do not permit yourself to fall asleep outside the bedroom. Return to bed when, and only when, you are sleepy. Repeat this process as often as necessary throughout the night.
- Use your bedroom for only sleep and sex.
- Avoid daytime napping. If an occasional nap is necessary, it should be kept to one hour. The bedroom should be quiet, dark and lend itself to sleep.
- Establish a relaxing pre-sleep ritual such as a warm bath, light bedtime snack or 10 minutes of reading.
- Exercise regularly. Restrict vigorous exercise to at least six hours prior to bedtime and mild exercise to at least four hours prior to bedtime.
- Keep a regular schedule. To help keep your inner clock running smoothly, have regular times for meals, medications, chores and other activities.
- Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime. However, a light snack can promote sound sleep.
- Avoid ingestion of caffeine within six hours of bedtime.
- Even a small dose of alcohol can produce dangerous levels of sleepiness if ingested when drowsy. Do not drink alcohol while taking sleep medication, sedatives, or other medicines that may interact with alcohol.
- Avoid the use of nicotine close to bedtime or during the night.