

SLEEP HYGIENE

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Personal Health Partners
Navigating the Seasons of Life



Good sleep hygiene tips:

1. Try to go to bed every night at the same time, and get up every morning at time. A regular sleeping pattern will make you feel better.
2. Avoid stimulants. Avoid nicotine, alcohol and caffeine close to bedtime. Discontinue nicotine, alcohol and caffeine at least 4 to 6 hours prior to bedtime. Do not use alcohol to get to sleep as although the alcohol will speed up the onset of sleep it begins to metabolize the alcohol it causes arousal and disrupts sleep.
3. Exercise. Refrain from strenuous exercises less than 4 hours before bedtime. If you must exercise, try yoga which is relaxing and can be done prior to bedtime. Try a morning walk to feel refreshed.
4. Naps can hinder your normal sleeping pattern. If you just cannot get through your day without a nap, then make sure that the nap is 25 minutes or less.
5. Food. Try not to eat 3 hours prior to bedtime, especially chocolate because of the caffeine. Heavy and spicy meals may cause gastric problems like heartburn, so if you cannot go to bed without eating its best to try a light healthy snack.
6. Associate your bed with sleep. Bedtime is not the time to discuss your day, your problems or watch television. Emotional turmoil can stimulate the brain and prevent sleep. If you have something on your mind, try a sleep journal. Journaling your feelings and thoughts before bed can promote a peaceful night's sleep.
7. Sleep rituals. You can develop your own ritual to remind your body that it is time to go to sleep. Try reading a book before bed, having a cup of decaffeinated tea, warm bath (1 to 2 hours prior) or meditation.

Take the quiz to see if you are practicing good sleep hygiene:

- I feel sleepy during the day, even when I get a good night's sleep. true or false
- I get very irritable when I cannot sleep. true or false
- I often wake up at night and have trouble falling back to sleep. true or false
- It usually takes me a long time to fall asleep. true or false
- I usually feel achy and stiff when I wake up in the morning. true or false
- I have fallen asleep while driving. true or false

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine that developed the quiz, if you answered true more than twice, you may want to take a look at your sleep hygiene pattern and discuss your sleep problem with a health care professional.

Do you have trouble falling asleep at the right time, or find yourself falling asleep at the wrong time? Have you felt exhausted after a night's sleep, or wishing you could take a nap or have caught yourself nodding off while driving? If you have answered yes to these questions, then you may have poor sleep hygiene.

According to Web MD, sleep hygiene refers to those practices, habits, and environmental factors that are critically important for a sound sleep. It is very important to have normal nighttime sleep and full daytime awareness. You want to wake feeling refreshed and alert not exhausted and irritable.

For any questions about your health,
please contact Personal Health Partners at
800-327-7272


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