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Sleep Hygiene Tips: Things you can do to promote good sleep

Maintain a regular sleep routine.

- Go to bed at the same time. Wake up at the same time. Ideally, your schedule will remain the same (+/- 20 minutes) every night of the week.

Avoid naps if possible.

- Naps decrease the 'Sleep Debt' that is so necessary for easy sleep onset.
- Each of us needs a certain amount of sleep per 24-hour period. We need that amount, and not more than that.
- When we take naps, it decreases the amount of sleep that we need the next night – which may cause sleep fragmentation and lead to insomnia.

Don't stay in bed awake for more than 5-10 minutes.

- If you find your mind racing, or worrying about not being able to sleep during the middle of the night, get out of bed, and sit in a chair in the dark. Let your mind race while you are in the chair, until you are sleepy, then return to bed. No TV or internet during these periods, which will just stimulate you.
- If this happens several times during the night, that is OK. Just maintain your regular wake time, and try to avoid naps.

Don't watch TV or read in bed.

- When you watch TV or read in bed, you associate the bed with wakefulness.
- The bed is best reserved for two things – sleep and sex.

Do not drink caffeine inappropriately.

- The effects of caffeine may last for several hours after ingestion. Caffeine can fragment sleep, and cause difficulty initiating sleep. If you drink caffeine, use it only before noon.
- Remember that soda, tea, and chocolate contain caffeine as well.

Avoid substances that interfere with sleep.

- Cigarettes, alcohol, and over-the-counter medications may cause fragmented sleep.

Exercise regularly.

- Exercise before 2 pm every day. Exercise promotes continuous sleep.
- Avoid rigorous exercise before bedtime. Rigorous exercise circulates endorphins into the body, which may cause difficulty initiating sleep.

Have a quiet, comfortable bedroom.

- Set your bedroom thermostat at a comfortable temperature. Generally, a little cooler is better than a little warmer.
- Turn off the TV and other extraneous noise that may disrupt sleep. Background 'white noise' like a fan is OK.
- If your pets awaken you, keep them outside the bedroom.
- Your bedroom should be dark. Turn off bright lights.
- If you are a 'clock watcher' at night, hide the clock.

Develop a comfortable pre-bedtime ritual.

- Take a warm bath or shower.
- Engage in meditation or quiet time.

Courtesy of the American Sleep Association