

Sleep Better for a Healthier You

Did you know that sufficient sleep is just as important to your health as healthy eating and exercise? As you sleep, your body restores itself for the following day, recharges your brain; and releases important hormones. Both the quality and quantity of sleep are important for physical, emotional and mental health.



Sleep Requirements

The National Sleep Foundation recommends the following guidelines for sleep:

	Newborns 0-3 months	Infants 4-11 months	Toddler 1 to 2 years	Children 3 to 5 years	Children 6 to 13 years	Teenagers 14 to 17 years	Adults 18 to 64 years	Adults 65 or older
	14 to 17 hours	12 to 15 hours	11 to 14 hours	10 to 13 hours	9 to 11 hours	8 to 10 hours	7 to 9 hours	7 to 8 hours

Take Action: Improve Your Sleep!

Get some sunlight. Exposure to sunlight during the day is important for a good night's sleep. It helps to reset the pineal gland which produces the sleep assisting hormone melatonin.

Create a sleep friendly bedroom. A sleep-friendly bedroom promotes sleep through comfort and relaxation. Make your bedroom an ideal temperature, dark or dimly lit, and quiet with a comfortable bed.

Set a schedule. Aim to go to bed at the same time every night. This helps your body know when it's "sleep time," making falling asleep—and staying asleep—easier.

Find a bedtime routine. Choose a relaxing activity such as reading, listening to music or drink a warm glass of milk. A routine activity can train your body to unwind for sleep.

Turn off your electronics. The goal is to disengage your active brain. The light, noise and stimulation from electronics can prevent a full night's rest.

Exercise regularly. People who exercise regularly tend to sleep better. If you exercise too close to bedtime, you may find it difficult to fall asleep. Some people find they sleep better when they exercise before bed. Find the right time for you to exercise.

Reduce your stress. Find a way to de-stress before bed like meditating, journaling or talking with your partner or family member.

Avoid alcohol, tobacco and caffeine. Alcohol prevents you from getting restful sleep. Tobacco and caffeine are both stimulants which can make it difficult to fall asleep.

[Source: National Sleep Foundation, Sleep.org]

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