

SLEEP HYGIENE

FACTS ABOUT SLEEP

- Getting at least six hours of sleep a night allows brain cells to rest and repair.
- Sleep strengthens the immune system.
- Memories from the day are organized, consolidated, stored, or discarded during sleep.
- Areas of the brain that control emotions, decision-making, and social interactions are at rest during sleep, which allows peak performance in waking hours.

STRATEGIES TO HELP FALL ASLEEP MORE QUICKLY

- Get at least one hour of sunlight and fresh air every day to help the body find a sleep rhythm.
- Limit daytime napping to 30 minutes.
- Dim lights in living areas one or two hours before bedtime.
- Avoid TV and computer use, as they emit blue light that stimulates the brain. Changing settings on electronics can minimize blue light.
- Read a book, play soft music, or take a warm bath to help relax.
- Some people find exercising just before bed to be relaxing, but in general do not exercise within two hours of bedtime.
- Decorate the bedroom with soft colors, provide comfortable bedding, keep lights low, and keep the room cool to promote better sleep.
- Avoid caffeine eight hours before bedtime.
- Avoid nicotine before bedtime, or better yet, quit smoking.
- A light snack before bed that includes protein, such as sliced turkey or yogurt, and complex carbohydrates, such whole grain bread, may help induce sleep. However, eating within two hours of bedtime may promote reflux.
- Treat the bed as a place to rest; avoid work and telephone use in bed.

- Keep a pad and pen at the bedside to write down recurring thoughts eliminating the stress of trying to remember them while falling asleep.
- Use deep breathing and guided imagery to promote relaxation. Counting while inhaling and again while exhaling can be a good distraction for the mind and allow sleep to set in.
- If sleep does not occur within 20 minutes of going to bed, get up, do something relaxing, and try again.
- Open the shades and let in the natural light upon awakening.
- Discuss the use of melatonin or other sleep aids with your medical provider.

TIPS TO STAY ASLEEP

- Keep a regular schedule of going to bed and rising in the morning, not changing the schedule by more than one hour on any given day.
- Avoid alcohol within six hours of bedtime. Though it may help a person to fall asleep, it interrupts normal sleep patterns and causes wakefulness later in the night.
- Minimize fluids a few hours before bedtime to avoid awakenings and bathroom trips during the night.