Healthy Habits to Improve Your Sleep

Sutter Health

If you have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep, it is time to try some healthy sleep habits. You can do many things for a better night's sleep. Try as many tips as you can.

Healthy Sleep Habits

During the day, try to:

- **Exercise regularly.** Even 10 minutes of exercise can improve your sleep.

- **Limit your caffeine drinks** to the morning or early afternoon. Caffeine makes it harder to go to sleep and can upset your natural sleep cycle.

- **Make time to meditate.** Meditation can calm the mind and relax the body. Try smartphone apps to guide you.

- **Go to bed and get up at the same time every day,** even on the weekends. A regular sleeping pattern promotes better sleep and supports your natural sleep cycle.

- **Do not eat meals for at least 2 hours before bed.** Give your body time to digest food to support restful sleep.

- **Skip alcohol.** Alcohol impacts the quality of your sleep, leaving you tired the next day.

Before sleep (30 to 60 minutes), try to:

- **Make a relaxing nightly routine.** Try gentle stretching or deep breathing.

- **Stay away from electronic devices** (cellphone, TV, computer). The stimulation and lighting can make it hard to fall asleep.

- **Read or write in a journal.** Writing a to-do list for the next day helps clear the mind.

Create a good sleep environment:

- **Make your bedroom a relaxing place** used for sleep, intimacy and winding down.

- **Try to keep TVs, computers and work out of your bedroom.**

- **Make the room dark, quiet and cool** but comfortable when going to sleep.

How Much Sleep Do Adults Need?

Most adults need 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

Sutter Resources

Talk to your healthcare team if you have concerns about your sleep. To learn more about sleep, go to *sutterhealth.org/ health/sleep.*

You may find resources in your area by going to *sutterhealth.org/ classes-events* and selecting the topic "Sleep."

Did You Know?

Healthy sleep can help you:

- Improve your mood
- Feel and look better
- Lower your stress
- Have more energy
- Think more clearly

What if my sleep doesn't get better?

If you try the healthy sleep habits and your sleep does not improve, it could be a sign of a sleep disorder. If you check any of the questions below and this symptom happens regularly, talk to your healthcare provider.

- ❑ Do I often feel tired, sleepy or fatigued during the day?
- ❑ Do I feel irritable during the day?
- ❑ Do I have trouble concentrating?
- ❑ Are my reaction times slow?
- ❑ Is it difficult for me to stay awake during activities?
- ❑ Have I fallen asleep or felt very tired while driving?
- ❑ Do I use caffeine as a way to keep myself awake?
- ❑ Do I use alcohol as a self-medication tool to fall asleep?
- ❑ Do I have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep?
- ❑ Do I snore loudly (louder than talking)?
- ❑ Has anyone noticed that I stop breathing during my sleep?
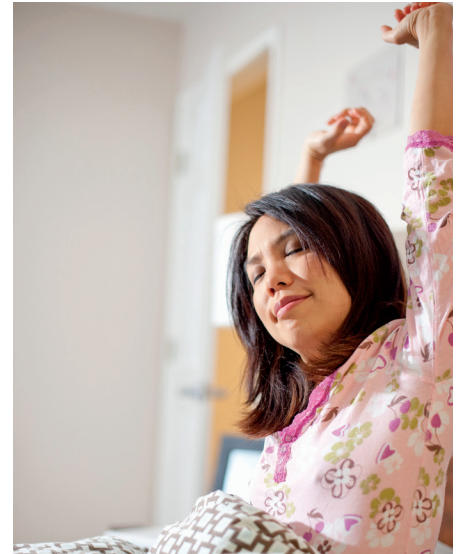
What if I don't get enough sleep?

Over time, lack of sleep can be risky for your health. Not getting enough sleep is linked with many chronic diseases and conditions—such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity and depression. So improving your sleep is key to better health.

What are treatments for sleep problems?

Treatments for sleep problems focus on the reason why you do not sleep well. If you have a medical problem, treating that problem may help you sleep better.

Doctors may prescribe sleep medicine for a short time if other treatments are not working. Medicines work best as a short-term treatment combined with lifestyle and behavior changes. Prescription sleep medicine comes with risks; be sure to talk with your doctor.