



StayHealthy

Health Information from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

Getting a Good Night's Sleep

If you have trouble going to sleep, wake up often during the night, or get up earlier than you want to, it could impair your ability to think, to handle stress, and to maintain a healthy immune system. Here are some tips to help you relax and get a full night's rest.

- Drink less fluid before bedtime, especially if you have an overactive bladder.
- Drink a soothing liquid like milk or herbal tea in the early evening.
- Avoid caffeine, particularly coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate. These are stimulants and will keep you up at night.
- Avoid alcohol. This produces a restless sleep, causing you to wake up during the night.
- Avoid large evening meals. Eat your main meal at lunchtime so you have more time to digest it.
- Cut down on spicy foods that can cause heartburn.
- Be as active as you can during the day.
- Go to bed the same time every night and set your alarm to wake up at the same time every morning to create a regular sleep cycle.



- Create a relaxing mood before bedtime. Play gentle music, take a warm bath, or focus on calming scenes such as sailboats on a lake or a peaceful garden.
- Don't lie in bed and worry about not falling asleep. If you don't fall asleep in 15 minutes, get up and go watch television, or listen to music, or read for a while until you feel tired.

If after using these tips for two weeks you still are not getting a good night's sleep, consult your doctor for other options.

— Ask the Nurse — What is Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea is the temporary stoppage of breathing during sleep that can cause the level of oxygen in the blood to fall, increases the stress on the heart, elevates blood pressure, and causes poor quality sleep. The symptoms include loud snoring and/or abnormal pattern of snoring with pauses and gasps. Other symptoms include excessive daytime sleepiness, memory changes, depression, and irritability. See your doctor if you have these symptoms.

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