

Top 10 Sleep Tips

To help you get more restful sleep

- 1.** Wake up at the same time each morning, including weekends. Although many people love to sleep in on weekends, waking up at the same time each day can put you to sleep faster at night and keep your sleep cycle more regular.
- 2.** Create regular bedtime/pre-sleep routines. Find a relaxing activity to do before bedtime that will calm you from the stress of your day, such as taking a bath, reading or listening to soothing music.
- 3.** Evaluate your sleeping environment. The ideal sleeping environment is cool, quiet, dark and comfortable. Avoid the blare of loud noises. If your partner snores or there are other loud noises you can't control, consider ear plugs or white noise humidifiers. Black-out curtains work well to block out bright sun, especially for shift workers or those who need to sleep during the day.
- 4.** Get out of bed if you are unable to fall asleep after about 20 minutes. Leave your bedroom and do something relaxing. Return to bed when you are sleepy.
- 5.** Is snoring a problem? Try sleeping on your side or stomach. Sleeping on your back allows gravity to pull on the soft tissues of your throat and neck, causing the airway to narrow or collapse completely. Sleeping on your side or stomach may help improve your breathing. Snoring may also be an indication of a more serious problem called obstructive sleep apnea.
- 6.** Exercise regularly, just not right before bed. Regular exercise is great for your overall health and can lead to a sounder sleep. Remember to keep heavy exertion limited to early hours, at least six hours before bedtime. Or, if doing mild exercise, do at least three/four hours or more before bedtime.
- 7.** Beware of caffeine/avoid alcohol before sleeping. Caffeine products such as coffee, cola, some tea and even chocolate, act as a stimulant and can rev up your body. Most experts recommend avoiding caffeine within six hours of bedtime. And although you might think a glass of wine may relax you before bed, alcohol disrupts sleep and can cause nighttime awakenings. Remember to stay away from alcohol when taking sleeping pills.
- 8.** Limit or skip napping especially during the daytime hours. However, if naps are necessary, take them in the early afternoon and limit to one hour or less.
- 9.** Stop smoking. Besides the proven health risks, nicotine is a stimulant and can cause difficulty falling asleep. When a smoker goes to sleep, he or she experiences nicotine withdrawal which can disrupt sleep patterns.
- 10.** Keep a sleep diary. If you have problems sleeping, keep a sleep journal and note your sleep patterns, problems and routines. Show to your doctor and evaluate whether you would benefit from seeing a sleep specialist.

If you are experiencing sleep disturbances on a regular basis, you should consider seeing your primary care physician or a sleep specialist. To make an appointment with one of HealthPartners Medical Group sleep specialists, please call us at 952-967-7616.

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