

SLEEP HYGIENE

Getting to sleep and staying asleep can be difficult for some people. Here are some things that can help improve your sleep.

- Keep a regular bedtime schedule. This means going to bed at the same time every night and getting up at the same time every morning. Don't "sleep in" on weekends.
- Don't be in bed for more than 8 hours. Most people do not need more than 8 hours of sleep. If you believe that you do, please talk to your sleep provider about your need to sleep. It may mean that you have an undiagnosed sleep disorder.
- Your bedroom should be cool, dark, and quiet to promote sleepiness.
- Don't look at the clock if you can't sleep or if you wake in the middle of the night. Looking at the clock creates anxiety which can then make it more difficult to fall asleep.
- Don't drink caffeine after noon to ensure the best sleep at night. Caffeine can remain in your body up to 6 to 12 hours in some individuals.
- Do not use computers, tablets, phones, or any other light producing technology 1 to 2 hours before bedtime. Light "wakes" your body. Read a book or magazine or participate in other activities that are calming and relaxing.
- Alcohol can cause interrupted sleep. Try to avoid drinking alcohol close to bedtime.
- Try to avoid smoking at bedtime. Nicotine is a stimulant and can cause you to have difficulty falling asleep. Don't smoke if you wake in the night.
- Do not watch television in bed. If you need noise, the only acceptable noise is a fan.
- If you cannot sleep, get up and leave the bedroom. Sit quietly somewhere until you feel sleepy and then return to bed. Do not turn on a television, use a computer or iPad, or check your email. These activities are stimulating and can keep you from returning to sleep. You can thumb through a magazine or read a book if the light you are using is behind you. Avoiding light is best.
- Try not to go to bed with thoughts on your mind. Before bed, take a few minutes to sit and think about what might be bothering you. Take a few notes and give yourself permission to "download" those thoughts on paper. Some people also keep a journal. Then you can revisit those concerns in the morning. You will have your notes to remind you of what it is you want to think about while you are awake during the day.