

## Q. What can I do to sleep better?

**A.** Ever wake up feeling tired and groggy? Maybe you toss and turn all night. Maybe you have trouble falling asleep. Or maybe you've gotten into the habit of trying to get by on 4-6 hours of sleep per night.

You're not alone. About 1 in 3 adults don't get the recommended 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night.<sup>1</sup>

If you're not getting a good night's sleep, it's important to do something about it. Why? Research shows lack of sleep can increase the risk for things like:<sup>2</sup>

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Mental health problems
- Accidents

### 5 Dreamy Tips to Help You Get Your Zzzs

If you want to get a better night's sleep, your doctor may be able to help. Sleep disorders and certain health conditions (like sleep apnea, depression, pain) can interfere with sleep. It's important to find out why you're not sleeping well to fix the problem.

For many people, getting a better night's sleep is a matter of lifestyle choices.

Healthy sleep habits like these can help you get your Zzzs. Here are 5 things you can do:

#### 1. Create a bedtime routine

Go to bed at the same time every night, even on weekends. And wake up at the same time every morning.



Create a routine that starts at least an hour before bedtime to help you fall asleep.<sup>3</sup>

#### 2. Turn off electronics 1 to 2 hours before bed

Staring into a screen can keep your brain active when you're trying to go to sleep.

Research shows light from electronics like a smartphone, tablet, computer or other device disrupts sleep, even if you turn them off at bedtime.<sup>4</sup>

Bright lights can also keep you awake longer. So dim or turn off lights for a better night's sleep. Controlling noise and temperature can also help promote sleep.

#### 3. Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed

Drinking coffee, energy drinks, and soda with caffeine might give you a boost of energy. But drink them too late in the day, and you'll have trouble falling asleep later.

Alcohol might help you fall asleep, but you won't sleep soundly through the night. People who have a drink before bed typically wake up more often because of breathing problems like sleep apnea and to use the bathroom.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. Be active during the day

If you want to sleep better at night, get 30 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

Research shows that daily exercise helps people sleep better at night, and be more alert during the day.<sup>6</sup>

## ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

Fit exercise into your schedule at least a couple hours before going to bed.

#### 5. Manage stress in healthy ways

If you're stressed out, you might find yourself staring at the ceiling when you should be sleeping.

Avoid dealing with stressful situations before bed. Save those problems for another day.

Counseling, relaxation techniques, healthy relationships, humor, journaling, and even a balanced diet can help you manage stress.

You deserve a good night's sleep. Create a bedtime routine and make smart lifestyle choices. You'll sleep better, have more energy, and be healthier.

### References

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