

THE PROACTIVE

Volume 5

Healthy Sleep Habits

May 2019

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Looking for ways to improve your sleep health? *Here's 7!*

Quality sleep is as essential to survival as food and water. Sleep affects almost every type of tissue and system in the body – from the brain, heart, and lungs to metabolism, immune function, mood, and disease resistance. Research shows that a chronic lack of sleep, or getting poor quality sleep, increases the risk of disorders including: high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity.

A person's need for sleep and sleep patterns change as they age but can vary significantly across individuals of the same age. Babies initially sleep as much as 16 to 18 hours per day, which may boost growth and development (especially of the brain). School-age children and teens on average need about 9.5 hours of sleep per night. Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep a night. After age 60, nighttime sleep tends to be shorter, lighter, and interrupted by multiple awakenings. Elderly people are also more likely to take medications that interfere with sleep.

Healthy sleep habits can make a big difference in your quality of life. Here are 7 tips to improve your sleep health:

1 Stick to a Sleep Schedule

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, including the weekends, will help your body regulate its sleep clock. This will make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep each night.

2 Avoid Napping

Naps may help you get through the day, but will make it hard when trying to fall asleep at night and stay asleep. If you must nap, do so for no longer than 20 minutes.

3 Keep Cool

Set the temperature in your house to around 65 degrees at night. Your body temperature needs to drop at night for sleep, and a lower room temperature helps signal your brain that it's time to sleep.

4 Comfortable Mattress/Pillows

Your pillows and mattress should be comfortable but supportive. Mattresses older than 10 years should be replaced. Pillows should be allergen free.

5 Daily Exercise

Performing physical exercise everyday can help with sleep. The more intense the workout the better. It's okay to workout at any time of the day but it should not be at the expense of your sleep schedule.

6 Wind Down

Spending the last hour before you go to bed doing a calming activity will help your body enter sleep mode. Calming activities could include reading, practicing meditation, or taking a hot bath. Avoid laptops, phones, and TVs, as the bright lights keep the brain active, making it harder to fall asleep.

7 Avoid Alcohol, Cigarettes, and Large Meals

Alcohol, cigarettes, and caffeine all disrupt sleep and should be avoided before bed. Eating large meals 2-3 hours before bedtime can cause uncomfortable indigestion that will make it harder to fall asleep.

Still Having Trouble Sleeping?

If you still find yourself having trouble falling and staying asleep, speak with your doctor. It may also be helpful to keep a Sleep Diary to record any sleeping habits, issues, and patterns.



Overnight THERAPY

Research shows that dreaming is not just a byproduct of sleep, but serves its own important functions in our well-being. It is believed that dreaming provides essential emotional first aid and enhances creativity and problem-solving.

What are dreams?

Dreams are subconscious imaginings that contain sounds, images, and other sensations while a person sleeps. Dreams happen most often during REM (rapid eye moment) sleep, which is the deepest stage of sleep. This stage occurs in intervals that can last anywhere from a few minutes to 30 minutes. A person cycles through REM sleep a number of times during the night.

Fun Facts:

- During a typical lifetime, people spend an average of six years dreaming.
- Not all dreams are in color.
- You are paralyzed during your dreams.