

What You Can Do to Sleep Better



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Good sleep habits can help make a difference in your health and well-being. Here are some tips that may help you sleep better.

What can I do to sleep better?

- **Keep a regular sleep schedule.**
 - Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends.
 - Do not take naps. If you need to nap, keep it short. Nap for no more than 30 minutes.
 - Keep a sleep diary. This may help you understand your sleep habits and changes you can make to help improve your sleep.
- **Do not go to bed too full or too hungry.**
 - If you eat a heavy meal before bedtime, this may cause indigestion and keep you awake. If you need to eat late, eat something light.
- **Exercise early in the day.**
 - Intense exercise in the late evening can make it hard to relax and fall asleep.
 - Schedule your exercise workouts early in the day. Try gentle exercises, like stretching or yoga, to help you relax at night.
- **Set a bedtime routine.**
 - Set a routine, so your body knows when it is time to go to sleep.
 - Take time to relax before going to bed. Try reading or listening to soft music.
- **Use the bedroom only for sleep and sex.**
 - Do not eat, write, watch TV or talk on the phone in bed.
 - Keep the bedroom dark, quiet and a little cool to help you sleep.
 - Do not go to bed unless you are sleepy. If you do not fall asleep after 15 to 20 minutes, get up and go to another room and do something to relax. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed.
- **Slow down toward the end of the day.**
 - Do not do work or household chores right before bedtime.
 - Stop doing tasks at least an hour before bedtime. Do quiet activities that will help you relax.
 - Turn off all electronic devices with screens (smartphone, tablet, computer) an hour before bedtime. The light from these devices can affect your sleep.

- **Do not use tobacco, and limit caffeine and sugary, high carbohydrate foods.**
 - Do not have any caffeine 8 hours before bedtime.
 - Do not eat sugary, high carbohydrate foods at bedtime.
- **Do not drink alcohol after dinner.**
 - Drinking in the late evening may help you go to sleep. But when the alcohol wears off, you may become restless and wake up.

If you find it hard to sleep at night after trying these tips, talk to your doctor about treatment options that are best for you.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

The Library for Health Information is available to help you find more health information at (614) 293-3707 or e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.