

Tips for Better Sleep

Disturbance for sleep (insomnia) is very common. One out of three persons will experience insomnia during his/her lifetime. Insomnia seems to be more prevalent in females (especially after menopause) and in the elderly. Sleep-aids are the most commonly taken over the counter and prescription medications. Long-term use of these medications can cause problems. Here are some tips to help you sleep better without the use of medications.

Develop Self-Discipline:

- People require from five to nine hours of sleep to feel fresh. Sleep only as much as needed to feel refreshed the following day
- Restricting time in bed solidifies sleep, and excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep.
- Get up at the same time each day, seven days a week. Regular wake-up times lead to regular sleep-onset time

Practice Moderation:

- A steady, daily program of exercise in the morning or afternoon deepens sleep.
- Both hunger and excessive fullness can disturb sleep. A light snack at bedtime may help sleep.
- Avoid excessive liquids in the evening in order to minimize the need for nighttime trips to the bathroom.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, colas) in the evening
- The chronic use of tobacco disturbs sleep
- Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening. Although alcohol helps people fall asleep more easily, their sleep is fragmented by alcohol.

Be Comfortable:

- Insulate your room against sound and light
- Choose a comfortable mattress and pillow
- Keep your room temperature moderate. Excessively warm or cold temperatures can disturb sleep.
- If you find yourself looking at the clock at night, turn it so that you cannot see, or cover it up.

Don't Try Harder to Fall Asleep:

- Start a relaxing bedtime routine.
 - Go to bed only when you are sleepy.
 - If you find yourself unable to fall asleep, get up and go into another room. Stay up as long as you wish, preferably engaged in a boring activity. Go back to bed only when you
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feel sleepy. If you are in bed for more than about 10 minutes without falling asleep, you should get out of bed.

- Do not use your bed for anything except sleep and sexual activity. Do not read, watch television, eat, or worry in bed.
- Do not take naps during the day, naps will interfere with you ability to fall asleep at night
- Use sleeping pills only as a last resort

Nearly everyone has occasional sleepless nights, however, if you have trouble sleeping on a regular or frequent basis, see you doctor. You could have a sleep disorder, such as obstructive sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome. Identifying and treating the cause of your sleep disturbance can help get you back on the road to a good night's sleep.
