

A good night's sleep starts with good sleep hygiene

The following are suggested tips to help you get the rest you need:

- ✓ Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at a similar time each morning. This strengthens the biological rhythm that controls the sleep-wake cycle. If bedtimes vary significantly on work-nights versus nights off, then the body's rhythms are disrupted, much like jet lag. People need an average of eight hours of sleep per night.
- ✓ Go to bed only when you are sleepy.
- ✓ If you cannot fall asleep, or awaken for more than 15 to 20 minutes during the night, get up and do something relaxing in another room. The bedroom should only be associated with sleep or sex.
- ✓ Do not use the quiet time once the lights are off to rehash the day or plan the next day's activities. Develop a worry time for these thoughts prior to bedtime.
- ✓ The bedroom should be dark (never try to fall asleep with the lights or TV on) and quiet. Draperies, including black-out curtains will help darken the room. Drapes and carpets also serve as sound absorbers.
- ✓ Cool rooms are better for sleeping than warm rooms.
- ✓ A light snack before bedtime may help you sleep, but avoid heavy meals late in the evening.
- ✓ Avoid alcohol in the late evening, this aggravates snoring, obstructive sleep apnea, and causes disturbed sleep during the latter part of the night. No one feels refreshed after drinking too much the night before.
- ✓ Avoid using sleeping pills for more than one or two nights per month. Avoid them totally if you have obstructive sleep apnea.
- ✓ Eliminate all caffeine after lunch time. It may not keep you from falling asleep, but it keeps you from obtaining deep sleep and staying asleep.
- ✓ Do not nap for more than 30 minutes during the day. Longer naps disrupt the body's ability to stay asleep at night.
- ✓ Regular exercise helps promote deep sleep, but avoid heavy exercise in the evenings, or it may make it harder to fall asleep. Avoid vigorous exercise after 7 p.m.