

BETTER SLEEP, BETTER HEALTH



Your behaviors can have a major impact on your sleep and can contribute to sleeplessness. Your actions during the day, and especially before bedtime, can make it difficult to fall asleep, stay asleep, or get restful sleep.

Your daily routines – what you eat and drink, the medications you take, how you schedule your days and how you choose to spend your evenings – can significantly impact your quality of sleep. Even a few slight adjustments can, in some cases, mean the difference between sound sleep and a restless night. Completing a two-week sleep diary can help

you understand how your routines affect your sleep.

The term **“sleep hygiene”** refers to a series of habits and rituals that can improve your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. Board certified sleep physicians recommend following a series of common-sense, healthy sleep habits to promote better sleep. These healthy sleep habits are a cornerstone of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), the most effective long-term treatment for patients with insomnia. CBT can help you address the detrimental thoughts and behaviors that are preventing you from sleeping. It also includes techniques for stress reduction, relaxation and sleep schedule management.

Sleep specialists recommend that you follow the healthy sleep habits that are highlighted below if you have difficulty sleeping or want to improve your sleep.

Follow these 'quick sleep' tips to establish healthy sleep habits:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Get up at the same time every day, even on weekends or during vacations.
- Set a bedtime that is early enough for you to get at least seven hours of sleep.
- Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy.
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed.
- Establish relaxing bedtime rituals.
- Use your bed only for sleep.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing. Keep the room at a comfortable, cool temperature.
- Limit exposure to light in the evenings.
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime. If you are hungry at night, eat a light, healthy snack.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
- Avoid consuming caffeine in the late afternoon or evening.
- Avoid consuming alcohol before bedtime.
- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.

If your sleep problem persists, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommends that you seek help from the sleep team at an AASM-accredited sleep center.