



SLEEP HYGIENE GUIDELINES

Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy. If you are not sleepy at bedtime, do something else. Read a book, listen to soft music, or browse through a magazine. Find something relaxing but not stimulating, to take your mind off worries about sleep. This will relax your body and distract your mind.

If you are not asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed. Find something else to do that will make you feel relaxed. If possible, do this in another room. Your bedroom should be used only for sleep. It is not a place to go to when you are bored. When you feel sleepy again, go back to bed.

Start using rituals that help you relax each night before bed. These can include things such as a warm bath, light snack, or a few minutes of reading.

Get up at the same time every morning. Do this even on weekends and holidays.

Get a full night's sleep on a regular basis. Get enough sleep so that you feel well rested nearly every day.

Avoid taking naps if you can. If you must take a nap, try to keep it short (less than one hour). Never take a nap after 3 PM.

Keep a regular schedule. Regular times for meals, medications, chores, and other activities help keep the inner body clock running smoothly.

Do not read, write, eat, watch TV, talk on the phone, or play cards in bed.

Do not have any caffeine after lunch.

Do not have beer, wine or any other alcohol within six hours of your bedtime.

Do not smoke or use any other source of nicotine before bedtime.

Do not go to bed hungry, but also don't eat a big meal near bedtime.

Avoid any strenuous exercise within six hours of your bedtime. You should exercise on a regular basis earlier in the day. Always talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program.

Avoid sleeping pills or use them cautiously. Most doctors do not prescribe sleeping pills for periods longer than three weeks. Do not drink alcohol when taking sleeping pills.

Make your bedroom quiet, dark, and slightly cool. It should remind you of a cave. While this may not sound tempting, it seems to work for bats. Bats are champion sleepers; they get about 16 hours of sleep each day. This could be because they sleep in a dark, cool cave.