

Sleep Hygiene Instructions

- + **Sleep only as much as you need to feel refreshed during the following day.**
Restricting your time in bed helps to consolidate and deepen your sleep. Excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep. Get up at your regular time the next day, no matter how little you slept.
- + **Get up at the same time each day, 7 days a week.** A regular wake time in the morning leads to regular times of sleep onset, and helps to set your biological clock.
- + **Exercise regularly.** Schedule exercise times so that they do not occur within 3 hours of when you intend to go to bed. Exercise makes it easier to initiate sleep and deepen sleep.
- + **Don't take your problems to bed.** Plan some time earlier in the evening for working on your problems or planning the next day's activities. Worrying may interfere with initiating sleep and produce shallow sleep.
- + **Train yourself to use the bedroom only for sleep and sexual activity.** This will help condition your brain to see bed as the place for sleeping. Do not read, watch TV or eat in bed.
- + **Do not try and fall asleep.** This only makes the problem worse. Instead, after 20 minutes, turn on the light, leave the bedroom, and do something different like reading a book (non-electronic). Return to bed only when you feel sleepy.
- + **Avoid long naps.** Staying awake during the day helps to fall asleep at night. Naps totaling more than 30 minutes increase your chances of having trouble sleeping at night.
- + **Make sure that your bedroom is comfortable and free from light and noise.** A comfortable, noise-free sleep environment will reduce the likelihood that you will wake up during the night. Noise that does not awaken you may disturb the quality of your sleep. Carpeting, insulated curtains, and closing the door may help.
- + **A cooler temperature is usually more comfortable during the night.** Excessively warm or cold sleep environments may disturb sleep.
- + **Eat regular meals and do not go to bed hungry.** Hunger may disturb sleep. A light snack at bedtime (especially carbohydrates) may help sleep, but avoid greasy or heavy foods.
- + **Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.**
- + **Cut down on all caffeine products.** Caffeinated beverages and food (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate) can cause difficulty falling asleep, awakenings during the night, and shallow sleep.
- + **Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening.** Although alcohol helps people fall asleep more easily, it causes awakenings later in the night.
- + **Smoking may disturb sleep.** Nicotine is a stimulant. Try not to smoke when you have trouble sleeping.

Sleep Hygiene Instructions - *Continued*

Individual Instructions:

RELEVANT RESOURCES

<http://www.bcwomens.ca/health-info/staying-healthy/sleep#Sleep--tips>

TO LEARN MORE ASK

- + Your family doctor.
- + HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with your primary care provider in the next 7-14 days. Seek medical attention or call 8-1-1 sooner if you are being kept awake by unusual or disturbing thoughts.

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Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website:

www.bcemn.ca/clinical_resource/sleep-hygiene-instructions/

bcemn.ca

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

