

# Get Better Sleep for Better Health

Getting 8 to 8½ hours of sleep each night not only leaves you more energized and better prepared to deal with stress—it also lowers your risk to many diseases.

Below are some tips to help you get the sleep you need. And remember: getting too much sleep (over 9 hours) can be just as unhealthy.



## Tips for Sleeping Well

- Consistently maintain regular bedtime and wake-up hours.
- Avoid caffeine consumption (tea, cola, coffee, chocolate) within 4-8 hours of bedtime.
- Exercise regularly and avoid intense physical activity 3 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid daytime naps.
- Avoid eating 2 hours before bedtime (a light snack can help avoid hunger pangs and aid sleep).
- Avoid stressful or noisy distractions while trying to get sleep (noisy clocks, bright lights, uncomfortable clothes or bedding).
- Avoid alcohol consumption (or allow 2 hours before bedtime), which can disturb sleep quality.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine (book, music, bath, relaxation technique).
- If you have difficulty relaxing at bedtime, then herbal relaxation aids such as valerian, passionflower, hops, or lemon balm may be helpful.
- Get out of bed if you don't fall asleep within 15 to 20 minutes, and return only if sleepy.
- Use the bed for sex and sleep only (no TV, laptop computer, reading, etc.)

## Signs of Sleep Disturbances

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty waking up in the morning
- Waking up tired
- Daytime drowsiness
- Microsleeps or “nodding off”
- Zoning out in a conversation or task
- Altered memory or judgment
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making simple decisions
- Clumsy and/or slower reaction times
- Feeling emotional for no apparent reason
- Snoring (sleep apnea)
- Routinely falling asleep within 5 minutes of lying down
- Waking up frequently during the night with difficulty returning to sleep

# How Much Sleep Do You Need?

