

Sleep and Your Health

Not sleeping enough hours each night or not sleeping well can cause many health problems. Poor sleep habits may be linked to obesity, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, atrial fibrillation (irregular heart beat), stroke, and heart failure. Having healthy sleep habits is healthy for your heart!

“How Long Should I Sleep Each Night?” The “<” means less than. The “>” means greater than. The “h” means hours.

Age	Newborns (0–3 months)	Infants (4–11 months)	Toddlers (ages 1–2)	Preschoolers (ages 3–5)	Children (ages 6–13)	Teenagers (ages 14–17)	Young Adults (ages 18–25)	Adults (ages 26–64)	Elderly (age ≥65)
Achieve	14–17 h	12–15 h	11–14 h	10–13 h	9–11 h	8–10 h	7–9 h	7–9 h	7–8 h
Avoid	<11, >19 h	<10, >18 h	<9, >16 h	<8, >14 h	<7, >12 h	<7, >11 h	<6, >11 h	<6, >10 h	<5, >9 h

“What Can I Do for Healthy Sleep Habits?”

DO

- Try to be in bright light during the day.
- Have a daily physical activity routine.
- Exercise in the morning and/or afternoon.
- Set aside a “worry” time during the day so you can relax at bedtime.
- Make the area where you sleep comfortable.
- Enjoy a relaxing activity before bedtime like light reading or listening to calming music.
- Avoid screen time (TV, computer, tablet, smartphone) 2 hours before bedtime.
- Enjoy a warm bath.
- Use bed only for sleeping or intimacy.
- Establish a regular sleep pattern. Go to bed and get up about the same time every day, even on weekends.

DON'T

- Drink alcohol. Drinking too much will make your sleep restless.
- Use products that have caffeine (for example: coffee, soda, energy drinks), nicotine, and other stimulants.
- Have exposure to bright light during the night.
- Exercise within 2–4 hours of bedtime.
- Have heavy meals within 2–3 hours of bedtime. If you are hungry, eat only a light snack.
- Nap, if you are not a shift worker.
- Watch the clock. This can make you more anxious about not sleeping.
- Keep trying to sleep. Instead, get out of bed and do a relaxing activity until you feel tired.
- Have your bedroom too hot or too cold.
- Allow excessive noise.

Signs and Symptoms You May have a Sleep Problem

The symptoms of a condition called “sleep apnea” are listed below. If you or a family member notice any of these symptoms, talk with your healthcare provider.

- Snoring
- Temporarily stop of breathing during sleep
- Gasping/choking during sleep
- Unexplained daytime sleepiness
- Large neck size (greater than 17 inches for men, greater than 16 inches for women)
- Middle-of-the-night waking or insomnia
- Non-refreshing sleep