

# Learning About Sleeping Well



## What does sleeping well mean?

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Sleeping well means getting enough sleep to feel good and stay healthy. How much sleep is enough varies among people.

The number of hours you sleep and how you feel when you wake up are both important. If you do not feel refreshed, you probably need more sleep. Another sign of not getting enough sleep is feeling tired during the day.

Experts recommend that adults get at least 7 or more hours of sleep per day. Children and older adults need more sleep.

## Why is getting enough sleep important?

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Getting enough quality sleep is a basic part of good health. When your sleep suffers, your physical health, mood, and your thoughts can suffer too. You may find yourself feeling more grumpy or stressed. Not getting enough sleep also can lead to serious problems, including injury, accidents, anxiety, and depression.

## What might cause poor sleeping?

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Many things can cause sleep problems, including:

- Changes to your sleep schedule.
- Stress. Stress can be caused by fear about a single event, such as giving a speech. Or you may have ongoing stress, such as worry about work or school.
- Depression, anxiety, and other mental or emotional conditions.
- Changes in your sleep habits or surroundings. This includes changes that happen where you sleep, such as noise, light, or sleeping in a different bed. It also includes changes in your sleep pattern, such as having jet lag or working a late shift.
- Health problems, such as pain, breathing problems, and restless legs syndrome.

- Lack of regular exercise.
- Using alcohol, nicotine, or caffeine before bed.

## How can you help yourself?

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Here are some tips that may help you sleep more soundly and wake up feeling more refreshed.

### Your sleeping area

- Use your bedroom only for sleeping and sex. A bit of light reading may help you fall asleep. But if it doesn't, do your reading elsewhere in the house. Try not to use your TV, computer, smartphone, or tablet while you are in bed.
- Be sure your bed is big enough to stretch out comfortably, especially if you have a sleep partner.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool. Use curtains, blinds, or a sleep mask to block out light. To block out noise, use earplugs, soothing music, or a "white noise" machine.

### Your evening and bedtime routine

- Create a relaxing bedtime routine. You might want to take a warm shower or bath, or listen to soothing music.
- Go to bed at the same time every night. And get up at the same time every morning, even if you feel tired.

### What to avoid

- Limit caffeine (coffee, tea, caffeinated sodas) during the day, and don't have any for at least 6 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before bedtime. Alcohol can cause you to wake up more often during the night.
- Try not to smoke or use tobacco, especially in the evening. Nicotine can keep you awake.
- Limit naps during the day, especially close to bedtime.
- Avoid lying in bed awake for too long. If you can't fall asleep or if you wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep within about 20 minutes, get out of bed and go to another room until you feel sleepy.
- Avoid taking medicine right before bed that may keep you awake or make you feel hyper or energized. Your doctor can tell you if your medicine may do this and if you can take it earlier in the day.

### If you can't sleep

- Imagine yourself in a peaceful, pleasant scene. Focus on the details and feelings of being in a place that is relaxing.
- Get up and do a quiet or boring activity until you feel sleepy.
- Avoid drinking any liquids before going to bed to help prevent waking up often to use the bathroom.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **J942** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Sleeping Well**".

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