



# Get Better Sleep for Better Health

Getting 7 to 8 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.

## Tips for Sleeping Well

Below are some tips to help you get the sleep you need. And remember: getting too much sleep (over 8 hours) can be just as unhealthy.

- ▶ Consistently maintain regular bedtime and wake-up hours.
- ▶ Avoid caffeine consumption (tea, cola, coffee, chocolate) within 4 hours to 8 hours of bedtime.
- ▶ Exercise regularly and avoid intense physical activity 3 hours before bedtime.
- ▶ Avoid daytime naps.
- ▶ Avoid eating a meal 2 hours before bedtime (a light snack can help avoid hunger pangs and aid sleep).
- ▶ Avoid stressful or noisy distractions while trying to sleep (noisy clocks, bright lights, uncomfortable clothes or bedding).
- ▶ Avoid alcohol consumption 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 minutes 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?



## Hours of Sleep Each Night

**BAD:**  
Less than 7 hours



### Risks/Associations

- Hunger & weight gain
- Physical inactivity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Insulin resistance
- Inflammation
- Slowed reactions
- Memory & attention suffers
- Creativity suffers
- Depression & anxiety
- Weakened immunity
- Heart disease
- Stress

**GOOD:**  
7 hours to 8 hours



### Benefits

- Energy
- Stress management
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Blood sugar balance
- Healthy body composition

**BAD:**  
More than 8 hours



### Risks/Associations

- Heart disease
- Physical inactivity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Insulin resistance
- Exhaustion
- Depression