



Sweet dreams

Sleep resources guidebook

Resources *for* Living[®]



Sleep matters

How much sleep do you get each night?

Does your to-do list have you burning the midnight oil? Do you go to bed, only to lay there thinking about your day?

Sleep is an important part of your health. Making sleep a priority can help you manage stress, boost your mood and even lose weight. It only takes a few simple steps to improve your sleep habits. Learn more about sleep and how you can make yours more restful with this guidebook.

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Sleep: It's more than just a beauty rest!

Do you consider it a luxury to get a full night's rest? If so, you may need to "sleep on that!" The fact is, we all need enough sleep to be at our best physically, emotionally and mentally.

Do you get enough sleep?

More than a third of Americans don't get the sleep they need.¹ As a result, they often spend their daytime hours irritable, stressed, disorganized and accident prone.

What does sleep do for you?

Sleep is good for your mental and physical health. Some of the benefits of getting enough sleep include²:

- **Better ability to fight illness.** Sleep helps you stay healthy. During sleep, your immune system rebuilds to help you ward off illness.
- **Better stress management.** As you wind down for bed, your body releases calming hormones. These help counteract and reduce the stress hormones in your system. Sleep gives your body a timeout from tension.
- **Better memory.** While you're asleep, your body is resting. But your brain is always at work. It's busy sorting out new experiences and information. It creates links that build your memory even while you're snoozing. So getting enough sleep actually helps your memory.
- **Better safety record.** When you don't get enough sleep, you're less organized and focused. This can have serious results. For instance, car accidents, falls and mistakes happen more often when people are tired. Sleepy drivers can be as dangerous as drunk drivers!³

- **Better emotional balance.** Have you ever noticed you're more cranky or easily upset when you're tired? That's because sleeping gives your brain the chance to regulate chemicals and hormones that impact your mental and emotional well-being. Without enough sleep, it can be harder to cope with everyday stress.
- **Better weight control.** Getting enough sleep may help keep your weight steady. Lack of sleep can throw off the balance of hormones that tell you when you're hungry. Sometimes people who are too tired eat more because they receive "hunger signals" as a result of this imbalance. Some experts also believe that lack of sleep may change the way your body digests carbohydrates, leading to possible weight gain.

Is there a "magic number" of hours you need to sleep?

Many sources say you need seven to nine hours of sleep per night. But there's no real magic number because we're all different. What works for some may not work for others. And what worked for you 10 years ago may be different now too. An easy way to find your best sleep amount is just by trial and error. See how you feel and function on more and less sleep. Then create a routine of sleeping for wellness!

More than a third of Americans don't get the sleep they need.¹

¹[1 in 3 Adults Don't Get Enough Sleep](#). CDC. Accessed February 2018.

²[The Health Benefits of a Better Night's Sleep](#). Good Health. Accessed February 2018.

³[Drowsy Driving vs. Drunk Driving: How Similar are They?](#) National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.





Sleep health

Sleep health is getting more attention these days. Many experts talk about sleep the same way they talk about diet and exercise. Sleep can impact all areas of your health. So by taking control of your sleep health, you can impact both your physical and mental well-being.

Your body needs rest

Your body works hard for you while you're awake. Eating, walking, typing on the computer and even sitting on the couch require your brain and body to spend energy. Sleep gives your body the break it needs.

Consider how sleep helps these parts of your body⁴:

- **Brain.** Think of all the information you take in while you're awake. During sleep, your brain goes to work on self-care so you'll be ready for the next day. It downloads the information you need to keep and throws away all the extra.
- **Lungs.** Your lungs have to keep up with you during the day. From working out to dealing with stress, your breathing can vary. While you sleep, your lungs can stay at a slow and regular pace.
- **Heart.** Sleep gives your heart a much-needed break. Sleeping leads to a reduced heart rate and blood pressure.
- **Muscles.** You move your body all day long. But while you sleep, your body sends out growth hormones that work to rebuild and repair your muscles.

⁴[Sleep Health](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

⁵[National Sleep Foundation Recommends New Sleep Times](#). National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

Sleep and age⁵

Our sleep needs change throughout our lifespan. Are you getting enough sleep for your age?

- **Newborns.** Babies less than 3 months of age sleep between 14 and 17 hours a day.
- **Infants.** Between the ages of 4 and 11 months, babies typically sleep between 12 and 16 hours a day.
- **Toddlers.** Small children ages 12 months to 2 years often sleep between 11 and 14 hours a day.
- **Preschoolers.** Children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old sleep between 10 and 13 hours a day.
- **School age children.** Between 6 and 12 years old, children typically need 9 to 12 hours of sleep each day.
- **Teenagers.** Teens ages 13 to 17 years old need 8 to 10 hours to feel their best. And these kids often have a shift in their normal sleep/wake cycles, making them want to go to sleep and wake up later.
- **Adults.** Adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep to feel their best. Some young adults under the age of 25, may need up to 11 hours a night.
- **Older adults.** Adults ages 65 and older optimally need 7 to 8 hours of sleep each day.





Improve your sleep

Even if you're not able to get between seven and nine hours of sleep a night, you can still improve the quality of your rest. Do you have a hard time falling asleep? Consider these tips⁶:

- **Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon.** Since caffeine is designed to keep you awake, you should avoid it for 4 to 6 hours before going to sleep.
- **Work out during the day.** People who exercise on a regular basis enjoy better sleep than those who don't.
- **Stay on a schedule.** Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day (even the weekends) helps you fall asleep and wake up refreshed.
- **Get comfortable.** Use a bed and pillow that give you comfort. And keep your room as dark as you can.

Sleep disorders

Sometimes you follow all the sleep advice and it still doesn't help — you're tired and sleep poorly. You may want to meet with a doctor to see if you've got a sleep disorder. It's estimated that between 50 and 70 million adults in the United States have a sleep disorder.⁷

If you're concerned about ongoing problems with your sleep, talk to your doctor. He or she can connect you to help and get you back to a state of sleep health. Remember, sleep is an important part of your life. Take care of your sleep health and you'll improve your overall health.

⁶[What is Sleep Hygiene.](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

⁷[Sleep and Sleep Disorder Statistics.](#) American Sleep Association. Accessed February 2018.



Sleep information FAQ

How much sleep do I need?

Most adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep each night to feel their best. And some adults may need as little as six or as much as 10 hours each night.⁵ But everyone is different. There are lots of factors that impact how much sleep is best for you. Things like age, gender, the quality of your sleep and hormones affect your “perfect” amount. Ask yourself these questions:

- **How long does it take me to fall asleep?** It’s great if you can fall asleep within 20 minutes of going to bed. If it takes longer, you may need to find out what’s getting in the way of your sleep. And if you barely make it to bed because you’re so tired, you’re probably sleep deprived.
- **Do I need an alarm to wake up?** If you wake up on your own in the morning, you’ve probably had enough sleep. But if you have a hard time waking up, you may need to go to bed earlier.
- **How do I feel?** Pay attention to how much you sleep and how you feel during the day. You may need to add or subtract sleep to find an amount that works well for you.

What kinds of problems can occur with sleep?

Sometimes you just can’t get good sleep. Sleep problems can be chronic or temporary and they can occur throughout the lifespan. Over 40 million Americans have chronic sleep issues. And another 20 million have sleep problems from time to time. There are more than 70 different types of sleep disorders.⁸ They tend to be grouped into one of these three categories:

- Lack of sleep
- Disturbed sleep
- Excessive sleep

Insomnia, or not being able to sleep, is the most common sleep disorder.⁸

Can sleep or lack of it be dangerous?

Lack of sleep can be dangerous. In fact, driving while tired can be as dangerous as driving drunk. In fact, about 100,000 auto crashes and 1,550 crash-related deaths are caused by driver fatigue each year.⁹

Some sleep disorders may be life threatening. In sleep apnea, the airway keeps closing off. This can occur hundreds of times during the night. Some of these pauses in airflow can be more than two minutes long. This can lead to all kinds of health issues and even death. The good news is, sleep apnea is easily treatable.



⁴[National Sleep Foundation Recommends New Sleep Times.](#) National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

⁸[List of Sleep Disorders.](#) Sleep Aid Resource. Accessed February 2018.

⁹[Slideshow: Fighting Fatigue and Sleepiness On The Road.](#) WebMD. Accessed February 2018.

Sleep information FAQ



What can interfere with sleep?

From medical issues to your bedroom, a lot of things can impact your quality of sleep. Consider these items:

- **Light.** Even small amounts of light can mess up your internal clock.
- **Shift work.** Working night shifts can disturb the body's sense of day and night.
- **Medical issues.** Many medical issues can impact your sleep. Anxiety, depression, acid reflux, chronic pain and other problems can hurt your sleep cycles.
- **Substances.** Common chemicals and medicines can affect your sleep. These include caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, beta blockers and antihistamines.
- **Environment.** In addition to light, pay attention to your sleep space. Things like noise, heat and even the comfort of your pillow can help or hurt your sleep.

How do I get help for my sleep problem?

Talk to your doctor. And be prepared with information when you meet. Make a log of your sleep schedule by keeping a sleep diary for a week or two. Make some notes about the type of problems you are having (difficulty falling asleep, snoring, daytime sleepiness, gasping for breath, tingling in the legs, etc).

Make a list of all the medications you take. If you have a partner, ask if you have any unusual symptoms during your sleep. You may want to bring your sleep partner with you to the doctor. He or she has essential information gained by observing you sleep. Your doctor may refer you to a sleep specialist or to have a sleep test.

What can I expect if I take a sleep test?

A sleep test will check on different body functions while you sleep. To get these measures, the technician will place stickers on your scalp, face, chest, and legs to observe brain waves, eye movements, muscle tension, breathing, heart rate and other functions. These tests are usually done on an outpatient basis either in a hospital or sleep lab.

Even sitting on the couch requires energy. Sleep gives your body the break it needs.

Sleep problems FAQ



Are sleep problems common?

Many adults have issue with poor sleep. These problems can be chronic or temporary and they can occur throughout the lifespan. Over 40 million Americans have chronic sleep issues. And another 20 million have sleep problems from time to time.⁸

Who is at risk for sleep disorders?

Anyone can have a sleep disorder. And for most of us, we'll probably have sleep problems at some point in our lives. But some people are more at risk for some sleep disorders. For example¹⁰:

- Women are more likely to have insomnia
- Men are more likely to have sleep apnea
- Children sleepwalk more than other groups¹¹
- People who use drugs, alcohol, nicotine and some medications are more likely to have sleep issues
- Individuals who experience high blood pressure or depression are at risk for sleep issues
- Those who weigh more are more likely to have a sleep disorder

What are the different kinds of sleep problems?

There are more than 100 different types of sleep disorders.¹² They tend to be grouped into one of these three categories:

- Lack of sleep
- Disturbed sleep
- Excessive sleep

How do I know if I have a sleep disorder?

If you're worried about a sleep disorder, it's best to talk to your doctor. But here are some common signs that you may have a problem with your sleep¹⁰:

- Your snoring disturbs others
- You have a hard time falling asleep at night more than three times a week
- You often wake up during the night
- You find yourself falling asleep during the day, while you try to do work or drive
- You have an itchy, crawly feeling in your legs
- You're often tired during the day
- You wake up with a headache or a dry/sore throat

Where can I find more information about sleep problems?

Reliable information about sleep disorders, screening tools and what to expect during a sleep study can be found at the following sites:

- *The American Academy of Sleep Medicine*: sleepeducation.com
- *Find an accredited sleep lab in your area*: sleepcenters.org

Are sleep studies covered by insurance?

Many insurance companies cover sleep studies. Call the number on your insurance card for more information.

How can I find a support group?

Sleep Apnea: sleepapnea.org

Restless legs: rls.org

⁸[List of Sleep Disorders](#). Sleep Aid Resource. Accessed February 2018.

⁹[Slideshow: Fighting Fatigue and Sleepiness On The Road](#). WebMD. Accessed February 2018.

¹⁰[Frequently Asked Questions](#). Crozer-Keystone Health System. Accessed February 2018.

¹¹[Sleepwalking](#). National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

¹²[Sleep Disorders](#). Stanford Medicine. Accessed February 2018.



*With better sleep,
you can feel better
and live better.*

Your circadian rhythm

Your circadian rhythm is your body's internal clock. It's the one that makes you feel awake or sleepy over a period of 24 hours. By better understanding it, you can work toward better sleep.

How does it work?¹³

Your circadian rhythm doesn't stay steady throughout the day. Rather, it tends to go up and down. It means that most of us feel tired between one and three in the afternoon.

We're all a little different. So our body clocks tend to be a little different too. That's why some people tend to be "morning people" while others are "night owls." And your circadian rhythm can change as you age. For example, teens are programmed to go to bed and wake up later. And older people need less sleep.

Making it work for you

It's best when you can keep your clock in balance. Here are some tips¹³:

- **Keep a regular schedule.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time, even on the weekends.
- **Get some morning sunshine.** Exposure to morning light will give you an energy boost.
- **Power down at night.** Bright lights in the evening can confuse your body clock. And it turns out artificial blue light (like the kind from your cell phone or laptop) is the worst. So unplug at least two to three hours before bed.

¹³[Circadian Rhythm and Your Body Clock](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.



Your circadian rhythm

Dealing with shift work

Some jobs never close. Police stations, hospitals and truck stations need to be open around-the-clock. Working an overnight shift can confuse your internal clock — making it hard to go to sleep, even when you're exhausted.

But there's good news. You can make small changes to help improve your sleep, even when you're on the graveyard shift. Consider these tips¹⁴:

- **Sleep in the dark.** Make sure your bedroom is dark — really dark. You can buy light-blocking curtains and even buy a sleep mask. Get rid of laptops and other items that create light.
- **Make your work bright.** If you can, try to get as much light as possible during your job. This will help trick your body into thinking it's daytime even if it's not.
- **Wear sunglasses.** Are you leaving work when it's light out but it's your bedtime? Try to wear sunglasses to limit your light exposure.
- **Wake up with light.** If you have to get up in the dark, turn on a bright light right away. Sometimes doing physical activity can help, too.

Coping with time zone changes

If you've traveled across time zones, you know it can be hard. It confuses your body's clock. This can make you feel tired, grumpy and sick. But there are ways you can adjust. Here are some steps to try¹⁵:

- **Drink water.** Caffeine and alcohol can interfere with your sleep. But drinking water can help you get some much-needed rest and offset headaches and an upset stomach.
- **Change your watch.** If you keep looking at your watch, thinking, "It's three here but at home it's..." you'll be in trouble. Start thinking in terms of your new time zone as soon as you get off the plane.
- **Get some sun.** The first day of your trip can be the hardest. Try to get outside in the sun. This will tell your body to wake up and limit the sleep hormone, melatonin.
- **Avoid napping.** Try to stay awake until your usual bedtime (in the new time zone). This will help you adjust to the new time.
- **Control the heat.** When your body gets ready to sleep, your temperature drops. So try to keep your hotel room at the same temperature you use at home.

Stay in balance

It's okay if you need a nap from time to time. Just be sure you nap smartly and limit your nap to 30 minutes. You don't want to confuse your circadian rhythm!

Even with challenges like shift work, you can take steps to "trick" your body's internal clock. Make sure to get plenty of light and activity during your "day." And at "night," make it dark, cool and restful. Take care of your sleep cycle. After all, it keeps you in balance.

¹⁴[Improve Your sleep on a Shift-Based Schedule.](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

¹⁵[The Causes of Jet Lag and How to Get Relief.](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.



What are parasomnias?

Parasomnia sounds like a scary word. But it's just a term that refers to things that can happen while people sleep. They affect about 10 percent of Americans and are more common in children.¹⁶ Experts believe that children have these issues more because their brains are still developing. The good news is, children often outgrow parasomnias. And they're usually harmless. Do you want to learn more? We've outlined some of the more common ones below:

Nightmares

You've probably heard the phrase, "Sweet dreams." But dreams aren't always good. While bad dreams are upsetting, you'll probably sleep through them. On the other hand, nightmares may be so unpleasant or scary they can wake a person up. People often recall details of nightmares, as they tend to be vivid.

Nightmares happen during the dreaming stage of sleep (REM) and usually in the latter half of the night.¹⁷ Nightmares can occur at any age, but are most common in children. In fact, about 25 percent of children between 5 and 12 years old have regular nightmares.¹⁷ Frequent nightmares may be a sign of feeling stressed or anxious.

Night terrors

Night terrors are like extreme nightmares. People having a night terror may feel panic or intense fear. Unlike nightmares, people don't tend to recall their dreams after a night terror.¹⁸

Night terrors usually happen about 90 minutes after people fall asleep. They may last a few minutes or up to a half an hour. People might scream, cry, sleepwalk or flail around, and it can be difficult to wake them. You may think you've woken someone having a night terror but the person will likely appear confused and may not talk or respond.¹⁸

Night terrors can happen to anyone, but they're most common in children between 3 and 12 years of age.¹⁸ And they tend to go away by the teen years.¹⁸ It can be hard to watch your child have a night terror. But know that your dreamer won't be harmed, though he or she may feel tired the next day.

Sleepwalking

Sleepwalking causes people to move while they're still asleep. This movement can range from sitting up in bed to walking around. You may notice a sleepwalker's eyes are open and glassy. If you talk to them, they may respond with slow, strange speech or not at all.¹⁹

We used to think that sleepwalkers were acting out their dreams. But actually, the brain fires off a message to wake up the body while the person is in a deep state of sleep. Sleepwalking tends to happen in the first part of the night, while the person's brain is slow and quiet but the body is still active.¹⁹ This tends to be the time of night when most of us toss and turn.

Sleepwalking is common in children, especially for those between the ages of four and eight. People tend to outgrow sleepwalking, although about four percent of adults sleepwalk.¹⁹



¹⁶[What are Parasomnias?](#) National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

¹⁷[Bad Dreams, Nightmares, and Night Terrors: Know the Difference.](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

¹⁸[Night Terrors.](#) WebMD. Accessed February 2018.

¹⁹[Sleepwalking: Why It Happens.](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.



What are parasomnias?

Some life and medical factors can lead to sleepwalking. Medical conditions such as restless leg syndrome, sleep apnea, anxiety and asthma are linked to sleepwalking. Some causes of sleepwalking might include¹⁹:

- Lack of sleep
- Stress
- Alcohol use
- Irregular sleep schedules

It can be tough to wake up someone who's sleepwalking. If you see a sleepwalker moving around, you may need to keep the person safe. This could include locking windows or removing harmful objects. If possible, try to steer the sleepwalker back to bed without touching him or her too much.

Teeth grinding or clenching

Do you wake up with a headache or a sore jaw? You may be grinding or clenching your teeth while you sleep. If it happens a lot, teeth grinding and clenching can disrupt sleep and damage your teeth. Some causes include²⁰:

- Teeth or jaw issues
- Anxiety
- Stress or other medical issues

Here are three ways to deal with teeth grinding²¹:

- Take time to relax and reduce stress before going to bed
- Try sleeping on your side, instead of your back
- Talk to your dentist about getting an oral device to protect your teeth while you sleep

Bedwetting

Bedwetting or peeing during sleep is normal for many young children. But it's something they outgrow. Consider the fact that 15 percent of 5 year-olds wet the bed but less than five percent of kids do so by the time they're 8-11.²² It's rare for teens or adults to wet the bed. If they do, they should talk to a doctor as there may be a medical issue.

Bedwetting is more common in males and has been linked to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). And here are some other facts to think about²²:



- Bedwetting can be genetic
- 75 percent of kids who wet the bed have a parent who used to do the same
- It can be caused by a small bladder
- It might be linked to constipation
- It's more common in children who sleep very deeply

REM behavior disorder (RBD)

For most people, dreaming happens only in the mind. In fact, while you're in REM sleep (the dreaming stage), most of your muscles can't move. In RBD, this system doesn't work. And it can result in people acting out their dreams.

The sleeper may talk, shout, scream, hit or punch. But there's good news. RBD can be treated with medication.²³

¹⁹[Sleepwalking: Why It Happens](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

²⁰[Three Reasons People Grind Their Teeth](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

²¹[Teeth Grinding - Coping](#). National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

²²[Why Do Some Kids Wet The Bed](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

²³[What is REM Behavior Disorder?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.



What are parasomnias?

Sleep paralysis

Think of waking up in the morning. Your mind is awake but you're not able to move your body or speak for several seconds. This is sleep paralysis. And while it will last a few minutes at most, it might be scary. Sleep paralysis happens as people fall asleep or wake up, leaving them unable to move or talk. Some people report a sense of choking. It's caused by your body "turning off" your muscles for sleep. Causes of sleep paralysis can include²⁴:

- Lack of sleep
- Irregular sleep schedules
- Substance misuse
- Mental health issues or other sleep problems



Restless leg syndrome (RLS)

About ten percent of American adults and two percent of children have RLS. It's known for giving people the urge to move their legs while they're trying to rest. Sometimes they have a sense of creeping, itching or pulling in their legs.

RLS can be treated. Lifestyle changes such as limiting caffeine or alcohol can help. And sometimes taking vitamins, working out and taking hot baths can manage symptoms. There are also medications to help treat RLS, so you may want to talk to your doctor.²⁵

Sleep talking

Sleep talking is speech or sounds made during sleep. Sleep talkers usually have no memory or awareness of talking in their sleep. Anyone can sleep talk, but it tends to be genetic and it happens more in men and children.²⁶

Sleep talking can be linked to²⁶:

- Lack of sleep
- Anxiety
- Alcohol or other drug use
- Stress
- Fever
- Depression

If sleep talking starts for people after the age of 25, it may be due to other medical issues. People usually don't seek treatment for it, unless it's causing problems for their sleep partners.²⁶

Having a sleep disorder can be stressful. If you or someone in your household might be experiencing a parasomnia, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor.

²⁴[Sleep Paralysis](#). WebMD. Accessed February 2018.

²⁵[Restless Leg Syndrome \(RLS\) and Sleep](#). National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

²⁶[Sleep Talking: What is it?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.



Sleep disorders

Sleep apnea

Did you know that eighteen million Americans suffer from obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)?²⁷ It's one of the most common sleep disorders. But how much do you know about this widespread problem?

What is sleep apnea?

Sleep apnea is characterized by pauses in breathing while you sleep. The term apnea literally means "without breath." Apneas typically last a few short seconds before breathing resumes. But they can last longer. Apneas may occur hundreds of times during the night.²⁷

There are three kinds of sleep apnea²⁷:

- **Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).** OSA is caused by a closing of the airway. This cuts off your oxygen until you wake up and start breathing again.
- **Central sleep apnea.** This type of problem is uncommon but can be very dangerous. Central sleep apnea occurs when the brain fails to send signals to the body to breathe.
- **Cheyne-Stokes respiration.** This problem happens when there is a rise and fall in the person's breathing pattern as they sleep. It can occur as a result of substance misuse, congestive heart failure, stroke and breathing difficulty due to high altitude.

Recognize the signs

If you suspect you or a loved one have sleep apnea, please see a doctor, as it can be life threatening. Here are some usual signs to look for²⁸:

- **Snoring.** Sometimes people snore. But if you snore so loudly that you regularly wake your partner, it might be cause for concern. Your partner might say you make other sounds like gasps, moans, snorts, gasps or choking noises.
- **Waking up.** If you're waking up gasping for air, you will want to get checked for sleep apnea.
- **Feeling sleepy.** As you can imagine, waking up to breathe doesn't make for restful sleep. This will make you very tired during the day. So much so, you might have trouble doing regular things.
- **Sleeping with your mouth open.** People with sleep apnea may complain of waking up each morning with a very dry mouth. They may sleep with their mouths open because it's easier to get air through the mouth than through the nose.

²⁷[Sleep Apnea.](#) Tuck Advanced Better Sleep. Accessed February 2018.

²⁸[What is Sleep Apnea?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.



Sleep disorders

Who is at risk?

Anyone can have sleep apnea — even children. But at-risk people tend to have one or more of these traits²⁹:

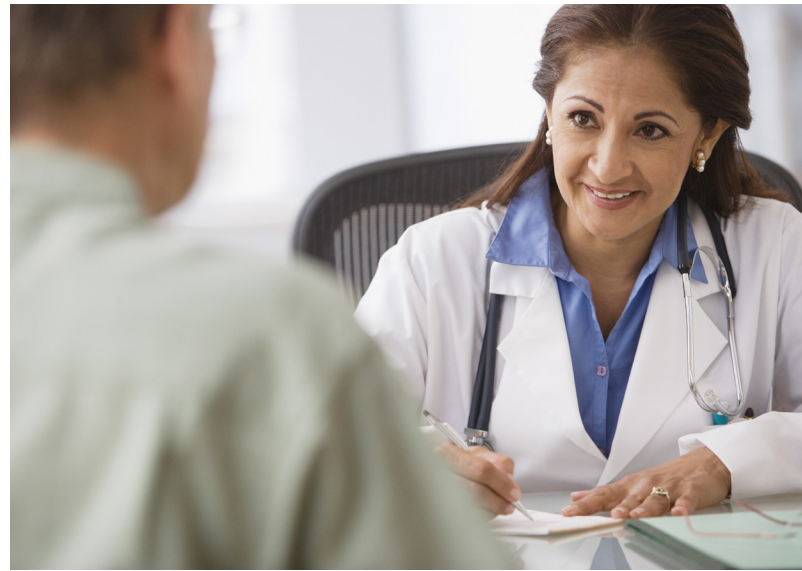
- **Overweight.** Thin people can have sleep apnea, too. But if you carry excess weight, it can cause fat pads that block your breathing.
- **Narrow airway.** Some people are born with a narrow airway. Swollen tonsils or adenoids can narrow or block your airway too.
- **Male.** Men are twice as likely to have sleep apnea. But women's risk goes up after menopause.
- **Older age.** Rates of sleep apnea go up in adults over the age of 60.

• **Nasal congestion.** Whether it's because of allergies or an issue with your septum, congestion can lead to OSA. People who smoke or use alcohol or certain medications are also more likely to develop OSA. Nicotine, alcohol and some drugs relax the muscles in your airway. And smoking can cause the airway to get inflamed. But these risks drop if you quit.³⁰

Diagnosis

If you think you have sleep apnea, call your doctor. Often your doctor will refer you to a sleep specialist to help decide if there's an issue. There are a few different tests they can run, including:

- **Polysomnography.** This test is also known as a sleep lab test. It measures your heart, lung, brain activity, body movement, blood oxygen and breathing patterns as you sleep.
- **Home sleep tests.** These tests are a simplified version of the sleep lab test. These tests are not as thorough and your doctor may still feel you need a polysomnography.
- **You may also be referred to a specialist, such as an ear, nose and throat doctor to rule out other issues.**



Treatment

There are a lot of different treatment options for sleep apnea. Doctors often recommend you make changes in your lifestyle. These might include weight loss, smoking cessation, reducing your alcohol use or even changing your sleep position.

Other times, your doctor might prescribe oral devices or nasal strips to open up your airway. In more extreme cases, doctors recommend surgery. One of the more common treatments is a sleep therapy machine, called a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device. The person wears a mask that goes over the nose and mouth during sleep. The mask blows air to help you breathe normally while you sleep. With so many options, you can find one that works for you.

²⁹[Obstructive Sleep Apnea](#). Mayo Clinic. Accessed February 2018.

³⁰[Sleep Apnea - What Increases Your Risk](#). Web MD. Accessed February 2018.



Sleep disorders

Insomnia

Most people have poor sleep from time to time. But how do you know if your lack of sleep is something more serious, like insomnia?

People with insomnia have trouble getting to sleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early and not being able to return to sleep. It's the most common sleep disorder, impacting 40 million Americans each year.³¹

Symptoms

Are you wondering if you or someone you know might have insomnia? People who have insomnia tend to have at least one of these symptoms³¹:

- Trouble falling asleep
- Concentration problems
- Trouble staying asleep
- Mood and behavior problems
- Sleeping without feeling rested
- Problems at work or school
- Fatigue or low energy
- Relationship issues

If you think you have insomnia, talk to your doctor. You may need to keep a sleep log for a week or two. In some cases, you may go to a sleep lab for testing.

³¹[How Insomnia Differs From Occasional Sleeplessness](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.





Sleep disorders

Types of insomnia

Insomnia tends to fall into one of two categories.³² Secondary insomnia happens when the person's sleep issues are caused by something else like a health problem or substance use. Primary insomnia isn't linked to any other health condition. Insomnia also varies in how long it lasts³²:

- **Acute insomnia** can last from one night to several weeks. It's usually linked to a stressful event in someone's life, like the loss of a job or the death of a loved one. Acute insomnia usually goes away on its own.
- **Chronic insomnia** is the more serious form. With chronic insomnia, a person has trouble sleeping at least three nights a week for at least three months.

What causes insomnia?

A number of things may lead to insomnia. A few common causes include³²:

- **Mental health issues.** Depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder can lead to sleep problems.
- **Life stress.** If you're up late worrying about work or how you're going to pay your bills, it can make it hard to fall asleep.
- **Routine.** Sometimes we get in our own way. Working late, long afternoon naps, shift work and exercising right before bed can prevent you from getting a good night's rest.
- **Diet choices.** Eating spicy foods or drinking caffeine in the late afternoon and evening might be hurting your sleep.³³
- **Environment.** If your bedroom isn't a restful place, it can be hard to get enough good sleep. Things like noise, light and temperature can hurt your sleep.

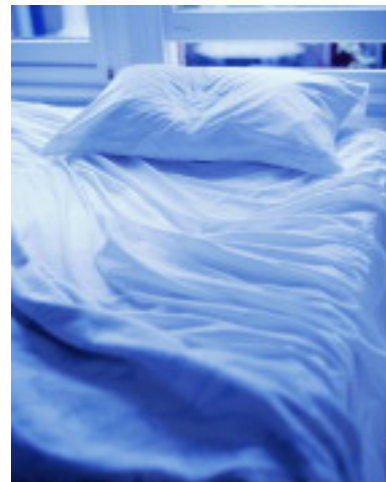
Treatment

Acute insomnia often goes away on its own. And if it's mild, you might be able to treat your insomnia by setting good sleep habits. In more serious cases, your doctor may give you medication.

If you have secondary insomnia, it's important to treat the issue that's causing your insomnia. In some cases, this may include counseling. While there are over-the-counter medications to help you sleep, you should talk to your doctor about taking them. Some of these medications can interfere with your health or other pills you take.

Getting help

There is help for insomnia. Step number one is finding out what's causing it. A doctor can help if lifestyle changes don't solve the problem.



³²[An Overview of Insomnia](#). WebMD. Accessed February 2018.

³³Borrelli, Lizette. [Top Ten Foods That Induce Insomnia](#). Medical Daily. Accessed February 2018.



Sleep disorders

Narcolepsy

What if you were talking with a friend or eating dinner and you suddenly fell asleep? Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder that can make people fall asleep at any time, even in the middle of an activity. It affects about one in 2000 people.³⁴

Having a sudden “sleep attack” could be a problem and even a danger. For instance, what if you were driving when you fell asleep? Narcolepsy can make people feel groggy and afraid of doing daily tasks.

What is narcolepsy?

Most people go to sleep and enter a period of light sleep. This is followed by a deeper, dreaming stage (REM sleep). For people with narcolepsy, REM happens almost as soon as they fall asleep. It can even happen while they're awake.³⁵

During a “sleep attack,” they'll fall asleep quickly and sometimes dream. These naps are brief, lasting only a few seconds to a few minutes. Once they're awake, they might feel rested for a short while. But fatigue will soon return and the person can fall asleep again.³⁴



Symptoms

Narcolepsy usually begins between the ages of 7 and 25.³⁴ But many people who have narcolepsy don't even know it. Symptoms can include³⁶:

- **Extreme daytime sleepiness (EDS).** People who have narcolepsy report extreme fatigue during the day. They have little energy for daily tasks.
- **Cataplexy.** Cataplexy causes a person's muscles to go suddenly limp. It can last seconds to minutes. It can be mild (slack jaw or slurred speech) or severe (falling to the ground). It's often set off by strong and sudden jolts such as surprise, laughter or anger.
- **Sleep paralysis.** This is being unable to move or speak while waking up or falling asleep. It only lasts a few seconds or minutes, after which people can move again. Even people who don't have narcolepsy can have this symptom.
- **Hallucinations.** These are vivid dream-like events that tend to happen while going to sleep or waking up. They're often visual but may involve other senses. And they can be scary at times.
- **Trouble sleeping at night.** Many people with narcolepsy have trouble sleeping at night. They often report repeated waking while trying to sleep.

Treatment

There is no known cure for narcolepsy. But medicines can help manage symptoms. Daytime sleepiness can be controlled with stimulants. And other sleep issues may be treated with antidepressants.

Sometimes lifestyle changes, like scheduled naps and avoiding caffeine and alcohol can also help control symptoms.

There are a lot of options for people who have narcolepsy. With the right treatment and support, they can find hope (and a good night's rest).

If you are concerned about narcolepsy symptoms, talk to your doctor to explore your options.

³⁴[What is Narcolepsy?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

³⁵[Narcolepsy.](#) Web MD. Accessed February 2018.

³⁶[Narcolepsy Symptoms.](#) Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Accessed February 2018.



Getting the most out of your sleep

There are a lot of reasons you need good sleep. And you've probably seen all the data that points to sleep problems. But what about healthy sleep? What is it and how can you get it?

We've put together some tips to help you make the most out of your sleep. From bedtime routines to napping, we think you'll find that good sleep doesn't have to be hard to find.

Make a sleep space

Think about where you sleep. The space where you lay your head at night has a lot to do with how well you sleep. Is your space relaxing? Do you have your office or a treadmill in there? Consider these tips³⁷:

- **Create a sleep haven.** As much as you can, make your room a place where you only go to sleep. Other activities — like working, watching TV or going online can make it tougher to wind down. So remove all those extra items and only spend sleep time in your room.
- **Make your room dark.** You'd be surprised how that little blue light on your clock can keep you awake. Block or turn off as many lights as you can. You may want to get a sleep mask or darkening window shades.
- **Keep your room quiet.** Noise can keep you awake. Try ear plugs or sound machines to block out sounds that might get in the way of a good night's rest.
- **Get your room cool.** As you go to sleep, your body temperature drops. So keeping your room cool can help you fall asleep.

Get on a schedule

Your body runs on an internal clock. This clock tells you when to be awake and when to sleep. It's affected by two main things: the amount of light you're exposed to and your schedule.¹³ The good news is these are things mostly in your control.

Try to keep your body's clock on track by sticking to a schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. And this includes weekends. Sadly, you can't "make up" for lost sleep. And if you want to sleep in, limit yourself to one extra hour at most.³⁸

When you wake up, try to get as much light as you can. This can help your body feel like it's time to start the day.¹³ So flip on some light switches or stand by a sunny window. At bedtime, limit your light exposure to help your body get ready for rest.

³⁷[Turn Your Bedroom Into a Sleep Haven.](#) Health. Accessed February 2018.

¹³[Circadian Rhythm and Your Body Clock.](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

³⁸[Is it OK to Sleep In on Weekends?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.





Getting the most out of your sleep

Take a nap

Napping can be good for your health. It's been linked to lower stress, a better mood and improved work performance.³⁹ But it's not for everyone. And if you decide to take a daytime rest, be a smart napper and follow these tips^{39,40}:

- Avoid napping if you have insomnia or other sleep issues. Naps can make these issues worse.
- Keep your naps short. Naps longer than 30 minutes can make you feel groggy.
- Aim for a 20 minute nap. This is the perfect amount of sleep to help you feel alert.
- Take your nap in the afternoon. Naps after lunch (between one and three) are best.

Create a routine

A bedtime routine sends a signal to your mind and body that it's time for rest. So try to do the same relaxing things each night in the hour before you go to bed. You might try:

- Turning off your television, phone and laptop
- Doing some yoga
- Listening to calm music
- Taking a bath

Be sure to avoid things right before bed that can excite you. This might include working out, reading the news, watching an exciting movie or reading a good book.



Eat and drink smartly

You've probably noticed that what you consume can affect how you feel. And this is true for your sleep too. But you might be surprised to know:

- **Caffeine can stay in your system for 12 hours.**⁴¹ So be sure to cut yourself off in the early afternoon. And beware of sneaky places where caffeine is found — like chocolate.
- **Alcohol makes you sleepy but hurts your sleep.**⁴² While it may help you nod off, alcohol keeps you from getting restful sleep. So avoid it during the last few hours of your day.
- **Your food can help you feel sleepy or keep you up.**⁴³ Heavy, fried food and spicy dishes can give you heartburn. But foods like bananas, warm milk and cherries can help you relax.

Manage your stress

Sometimes day-to-day worries can get in the way of a good night's rest. And that can turn into a bad cycle. Stress can lead to poor sleep and then your fatigue can make you feel more stressed. So what should you do? Here are some simple tips:

- Write down what's on your mind
 - Schedule "worry time" early in the day
 - Choose soothing activities in the evening
 - Find tech-free ways to relax before going to bed
 - Work out, but try to avoid doing so close to bedtime
- By taking small steps, you can improve your sleep. And with better sleep, you can feel better and live better. Nighty night!

³⁹[Health Benefits of Napping](#). Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

⁴⁰[Sleeping During the Day: Is it OK?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

⁴¹[How Much Caffeine Should You Really Be Having?](#) Sleep.Org. Accessed February 2018.

⁴²[How Alcohol Affects The Quality - and Quantity - of Sleep](#). National Sleep Foundation. Accessed February 2018.

⁴³[Best and Worst Foods for Sleep](#). Health. Accessed February 2018.



Sleep resources

Online resources

National Sleep Foundation

Find information on sleep disorders and problems, sleep topics, an online sleep journal, help with finding a sleep professional and a sleep shop where you can purchase items to help with sleep. [sleepfoundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org)

Sleep.org — from the National Sleep Foundation

Get articles on lifestyle, eating right, best sleep positions and more. You can register to receive updated articles and posts. [sleep.org](https://www.sleep.org)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Search data, stats, articles and health related information pertaining to sleep. [cdc.gov/sleep](https://www.cdc.gov/sleep)

Psychology Today

Read articles on sleep, relaxation, healthy eating, natural sleep aids and more. There is also a search tool to help locate a therapist, psychiatrist, life coach and more throughout the United States. [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)

HelpGuide.org

Find a guide to mental health and well-being. Articles include How to Sleep Better, Tips for Getting a Good Night's Sleep, Keeping a Regular Sleep Schedule, Creating a Relaxing Bedtime Routine and more. [helpguide.org](https://www.helpguide.org)

MayoClinic.org

Read articles on Adult Health and Healthy Lifestyles including articles on improving sleep. [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

WebMD

Locate articles and information on sleep disorders and achieving better sleep. [webmd.com/sleep-disorders](https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders)

Webinar

Taking your zzzz's seriously

Who couldn't use better sleep and more of it? This webinar will review:

- What "normal" sleep looks like
- Signs you might have a sleep disorder
- Tips to help improve your sleep.

Watch this webinar to learn more about the impact of sleep on your mental and physical health. [promoinfoools.com/Communications/Webinars/RFLWebinarWebPages/TakingYourZZZsSeriouslyCC.html](https://www.promoinfoools.com/Communications/Webinars/RFLWebinarWebPages/TakingYourZZZsSeriouslyCC.html)

Read a transcript of the sleep webinar here.

[promoinfoools.com/Communications/Webinars/RFLWebinarWebPages/TakingYourZZZsSeriously.pdf](https://www.promoinfoools.com/Communications/Webinars/RFLWebinarWebPages/TakingYourZZZsSeriously.pdf)



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