

Sleep Better



Sleep is important for your health. Getting enough sleep can help your immune system stay strong. It can also help your mood, so you can feel happier and less stressed. Lack of sleep may also make you more likely to gain weight.

How Much Sleep Do We Need?

- Most people need 7 or 8 hours a night.
- Children need more: 9 to 11 hours a night for school-age kids and up to 18 hours a day for newborns.
- Sleep is important for learning and memory.

Some Reasons that People Don't Get Enough Sleep:

- Stress and worries
- Too many activities and responsibilities
- Irregular work schedules
- Children or pets in the bed
- Aches and pains or illness (including depression)
- Tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, and other drugs, including medicines

How to Sleep Better:

- Go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool. Your bed should be comfortable.
- If you can't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing.
- Make "going to bed" mean "going to sleep." Use your bed only for rest, sleep, and sex.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol for several hours before bed.

How to Relax When You Get Into Bed:

- **Deep breathing.** Close your eyes – and try taking a few deep, slow breaths.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation.** Starting at your toes, tense all the muscles as tightly as you can, then completely relax. Work your way up from your feet to the top of your head.
- **Visualizing a peaceful, restful place.** Close your eyes and imagine a place or activity that is calming and peaceful for you. Concentrate on how relaxed this place or activity makes you feel.

Three Common Sleep Disorders:

- Sleep apnea: the person stops breathing, sometimes hundreds of times a night.
- Sleep deprivation (sleep debt): not getting enough sleep night after night.
- Insomnia: trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. It can be temporary or long-term.

Call Your Provider If You Have Sleep Problems. There are Many Treatments.

Sources:

WebMD: www.webmd.com

Help Guide: www.helpguide.org

For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.
Or visit www.healthysanfrancisco.org