

# Better Sleep for Teens: Care Instructions



## Overview

Sometimes you don't get enough sleep. Maybe you feel that you have too much to do and have to stay up late to get it done. Or maybe you want to go to sleep, but you toss and turn because you're worried about a test or a relationship.

But you need to sleep. It's important for your physical and emotional health. Sleep may help you stay healthy by keeping your immune system strong. Getting enough sleep can help your mood and make you feel less stressed.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

### Food and drink

- Limit caffeine (coffee, tea, caffeinated sodas) during the day, and don't have any for at least 6 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime. But a light snack may help you sleep.
- Don't go to bed thirsty. But avoid drinking so much that you have to get up often to urinate during the night.

### Healthy habits

- Make sleep a priority. If you're always staying up late, look at your activities to see what you can cut out. Make sleep a priority.
- Go to bed at a regular bedtime every night. Wake up at the same time each day, including weekends, even if you haven't slept well.
- If you keep going to bed too late, try changing your bedtime a little at a time. Try to go to bed 15 minutes earlier each night until you find a bedtime schedule you like.
- Get regular exercise.
- Get plenty of sunlight in the outdoors, especially in the morning and late afternoon.
- Set aside time for homework earlier in the day so you don't have to wait until the last minute to do

it.

- Do something relaxing before bedtime. Try deep breathing, yoga, meditation, tai chi, or muscle relaxation. Take a warm bath. Play a quiet game, or read a book. Try not to use the computer or talk to or text friends just before bedtime.

## **In bed**

- Use your bed only for sleep. Try not to use your TV, computer, smartphone, or tablet while you are in bed. Some people do some easy reading in bed to help them fall asleep. If this doesn't work for you, don't read in bed.
- Reduce the noise in the house, or mask it with a steady low noise, such as a fan on slow speed or a radio tuned to static. Use comfortable earplugs if you need them.
- Keep the room cool and dark. If you can't darken the room, use a sleep mask.
- Turn the clock so you can't see it, or put it in a drawer, if watching the clock makes you anxious about sleep.
- If your pillow isn't comfortable, see about getting another one.
- Consider making your bed off-limits to pets. They may move around on the bed or hop on and off of it. This may disturb your sleep.

## **Things to avoid**

- Avoid naps close to bedtime, and don't take long naps. Naps can help you. But if they're too long or too close to bedtime, they can make it hard to sleep at night.
- 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.

## **When should you call for help?**

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

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