

## Practicing good sleep hygiene from the American Sleep Apnea Association



Good “sleep hygiene” is anything that helps maintain your health by keeping your mind and body rested and strong. The idea behind sleep hygiene is the same as dental hygiene. Both rely on nightly or daily rituals for consistently good hygiene. Just as you get in the habit of brushing, flossing, and visiting your dentist regularly, you must implement a nightly routine of healthy habits to improve your sleep hygiene. Follow these sleep hygiene tips to help insure a good night's sleep.

- 1. Wait until you are sleepy before going to bed**  
If you're not sleepy at your regular bedtime, do something relaxing; read a book, listen to music, or do some other activity that relaxes, not stimulates you. This will relax your body and distract your mind to remove your worries about sleep.
- 2. Pre-sleep rituals help to initiate relaxation each night before bed**  
A warm bath, light snack, or a few minutes of reading or listening to music can initiate good sleep. Avoid eating heavy meals near bedtime.
- 3. If you're not asleep in 20 minutes, get out of bed**  
If you are not asleep after 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and find something else that will relax you enough to help make you sleepy.
- 4. Try to keep a regular sleep/wake schedule**  
Wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends and holidays.
- 5. Keep a regular daily schedule**  
Maintaining a regular schedules for meals, medications, chores, and other activities helps keep your body's clock running smoothly.
- 6. Sleep a full night on a regular basis**  
Get enough sleep every day so that you feel well rested.
- 7. If possible, avoid naps**  
If you have to take a nap, try to keep it to less than one hour and avoid taking a nap after 3 pm.
- 8. Do not read, eat, watch TV, talk on the phone, or play board games in bed**
- 9. Avoid caffeine after lunch**
- 10. Avoid alcohol of any type within six hours of your bedtime**
- 11. Do not smoke or ingest nicotine within two hours of your bedtime**
- 12. Exercise regularly but avoid strenuous exercise within six hours of your bedtime**  
Regular exercise is good, but do it earlier in the day (talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program).
- 13. Avoid sleeping pills, or use them cautiously**  
Always use sleeping pills as prescribed by your physician.
- 14. Try to clear your mind of things that make you worry**  
Find ways to relieve stress and aggravation. The bed is a place to rest, not a place to worry about the day's problems.
- 15. Maintain a quiet, dark and cool bedroom environment**  
Every person has his or her own personal preference as to the ideal sleep environment. Extremes should be avoided. If you need noise, use white noise or soft music. If you need light, use off light such as a night light in the bathroom or down the hall. Temperature is highly subjective....be comfortable.