



Sleep

Some of the reasons why people don't get enough sleep:

- A desire to stay up longer and go to bed later
- Getting too revved up by activities done late at night (computer, phone)
- Exposure to light can disrupt sleep
- Too little sleep each night can “over-arouse” a person’s brain
- Taking medication too late
- Eating a heavy meal too late
- Consuming too much sugar or caffeine
- Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, traumatic experiences
- Repetitive stressful thoughts, rumination
- Consuming alcohol and/or other drugs



Effects of not getting enough sleep:

- Concentration problems
- “Drifting off” in class or on the job
- Shortened attention span
- Impaired memory
- Poor decision-making
- Moodiness and aggression
- Depression
- Risk-taking behavior
- Slower physical reflexes, clumsiness
- Reduced sports performance
- Reduced work/school performance
- Increased absences and lateness
- Greater number of health problems

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SLEEP

- Make your bedroom a comfortable sleep environment: supportive mattress, the “right” pillow, comfortable sheets and blankets
- Keep the room temperature cool/warm enough
- Maintain a regular sleep-wake schedule
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and other substances that may disrupt your sleep
- Use your bed for *sleeping only*; identify a separate place for studying and eating
- Keep a pad and pencil at your bedside to get stressful thoughts out of your head and onto paper instead; some people find it helpful to make a “to-do list” before getting into bed
- Establish a calming pre-sleep routine
- Listen to calming music and/or use lavender as a calming scent; find out what works for you
- Exercise regularly, but not too soon before going to bed; shoot for earlier in the day
- Try non-caffeinated herbal tea or warm milk
- Restrict the amount of fluids consumed before bed to reduce your need to urinate
- Avoid heavy foods at night, but make sure to eat enough – just not too close to bedtime
- Keep a sleep log or use an activity tracker to track your progress
- Take your medications at the right times; discuss questions with your doctor or psychiatric provider
- Avoid napping too close to your regular bedtime
- Use light to your advantage by exposing yourself to light during the day and limiting light exposure in the evening; additionally, make sure your room is kept as dark as possible
- Try going to sleep when you are tired
- Avoid watching the clock when you are trying to fall asleep



UNH Resources for Improving Sleep

Visit the **Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health & Wellness** (online or in-person)

Website: <https://www.unh.edu/health/office-health-education-and-promotion>

- Develop a sleep plan and/or a sleep profile, and receive a free sleep kit
- Schedule a Sleep Coaching session
- Schedule a Medical Consultation for sleep
- Check out apps recommended for improving sleep (e.g., Pillow, Awaken, SleepCycle)



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