

## Tips for Better Sleep

### The bedroom

- Room should be both cool and dark, and well-ventilated
- Block distracting noise and as much light as possible; cover any light sources (even small ones)
- Bedroom for sleep and sex only (no TV or reading)
- Cover alarm clock so that you cannot keep checking to see what time it is

### Bed and wake times

- Up and to bed at same time daily—wake time is especially important
- Get up before 8:30 in the AM (especially if you suffer from depression)
- Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy

### Before sleep

- Light snack before bed OK: Warm milk and foods high in tryptophan may help: milk (especially warm), yogurt, eggs, turkey, meat, nuts, beans, fish, cheese (especially cheddar, gruyere, and Swiss), soy products
- Practice relaxation techniques before bed: yoga, deep breathing, progressive relaxation...
- Television and computer use (especially games and internet) can be stimulating; avoid if possible for the 2 hrs before bedtime
- Pre-sleep rituals are helpful: warm bath, few minutes of reading (not in the bedroom)
- Hot bath 90 min before bed: this will raise the body temperature, and the drop in temperature thereafter may leave you feeling sleepy

### Getting to sleep

- If it takes you more than 15-30 minutes to get to sleep, get up, go into another room, read until sleepy (non-stimulating material)
- You may also try mindfulness meditation
- If this doesn't work, time for medication. Though try using something other than medication before you resort to it, if you can
- Similar advice for waking during the night: if you wake and can't get back to sleep after 15-20 min, don't "try hard" to sleep: leave the bedroom, and
  - Read/have light snack/take bath/quiet activity, then
  - Go back to bed, typically in abt 20-30 min
  - No engaging activities such as housework, office work, computer, and no TV
- Alternate idea for waking during the night: practice mindfulness relaxation in bed for 20 minutes. See your doctor, nurse or therapist to learn how

### During the day

- Get out for some natural light abt 15 min first thing in the AM, or try a light box
- Exercise (though not before bed)
- Good nutrition, including folate and iron supplementation if your doctor suggests you need these
- Things to avoid
  - Daytime napping, or limit to 30-45 min
  - Don't lay in bed: sleep only when sleepy
  - Alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime
  - Caffeine 4-6 hours before bedtime
  - No nicotine before bedtime
  - Exercise 4 hrs before bed
  - Heavy, spicy, or sugary foods 4-6 hours before bedtime
  - Going to bed hungry
- Don't take worries to bed—assign a "worry period" during the evening or late afternoon