

Healthy Habits for Sleeping

Depression and anxiety often cause a disruption in sleep patterns. Poor sleep contributes to daytime tiredness, low energy, increased anger, decreased concentration and increased depression. If sleep is a problem for you, practice the following tips.

- Work towards a consistent sleep routine.
- Try to get up at the same time everyday regardless of how poorly you slept.
- If you have not fallen asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing like painting, drawing, or reading until you feel sleepy, then try again. (Repeat if necessary throughout the night).
- Turn off all screen devices (eg., phone, tablet, TV) at least 1 hour before bed.
- Use relaxation exercises or repetitive activities (e.g., counting backwards) or think of safe moments and pleasant memories.
- Limit naps to 20 - 30 minutes, early in the day, if needed.
- Create a good sleep environment, preferably a cool, dark, quiet room. Earplugs, eyeshades and white noise (e.g., fan) may be helpful.
- Develop a bedtime routine. Try a warm bath 90 minutes before bed as sleep is promoted as the body cools.
- Save your bedroom for sleep, healing and sex.
- Use nature, get fresh air and exercise regularly, preferably daily, but not within a few hours before bedtime.
- Reduce your daily consumption of caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco, especially close to bedtime.
- Be mindful of what you eat before bed. A light snack (milk, bananas or peanut butter are good choices) but try not to eat a large meal close to bedtime.
- Avoid sleeping medication, unless prescribed by your doctor.