

BMDA Sleep Tips for a Good Night's Rest

Sleep disorders may occur in people with cancer caused by treatment, physical illness, pain, hospitalization and emotional stress. In fact, 80% of patients with cancer report poor sleep, which may affect their ability to tolerate cancer therapies.

Try the tips below to help you get a good night's sleep.

During the Day

- Exercise regularly. A 20-minute walk during the day can help you relax. **Do not** exercise in the evening before bedtime unless you know exercising makes you sleepy afterwards
- Limit naps if you can. If you must rest, limit your nap to 30 minutes or less.

Before Bedtime

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, and nicotine in the late afternoon and evening.
- Limit liquids in the evening before going to bed.
- Turn off the TV or electronics 1 hour before bedtime.
- Listen to quiet music or take a warm bath to relax before bed.

If you are worried or anxious, or thoughts are keeping you awake, try these tips:

- Write down your thoughts in a journal
- Make a list of things you need to do. This will allow you to worry less about forgetting anything and will help you to relax.

At Bedtime

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Keep this routine even on weekends.
- A light bedtime snack of warm milk, turkey or a banana may make you sleepy.
- Use your bedroom for sleep and intimacy only.
- Do not read, watch TV, or work in the bedroom.
- If you tend to watch the clock at night, turn the clock around.
- If you have a partner, both people should go to bed at the same time, if possible.

Problems Falling Asleep or Waking up During the Night

- If you have not fallen asleep in 15 minutes, go to another room to relax.
- Listen to quiet music.

- Avoid things that provide mental stimulation such as watching TV or reading exciting books.
- Go back to bed when you feel sleepy. If you still cannot fall asleep, get up again and repeat these steps as necessary.

Improving Sleep during Your Hospital Stay

- Try the same strategies as above as if you are at home.
- Bring familiar items from home to make you more comfortable.
- Talk with your nurse and doctor about clustering your care.
- Consider using an eye mask to avoid light and earplugs to block out noise during sleep.
- Maintain a daily routine and do physical activity to promote a better night's sleep.
- Take a 20 to 30 minute nap, if needed, during the day to improve alertness and increase mood.
- Try not to lie in bed all day. Get up and do activities throughout the day.

Apps for Sleep

There are many types of apps available to help with sleep and relaxation. Do a search on your smart phone or tablet for new ideas to help improve your sleep quality.

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