Boulder Community Health

PATIENT EDUCATION

Ideas to Help You Sleep

Facts About Sleep

- Sleep habits and needs vary from one person to another.
- Your sleeping habits change as you age.
- Periods of awakening and falling back to sleep are normal.



Good Sleep Habits

- Allow yourself enough time to sleep.
- Go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day, including weekends. Waking up at the same time each day is most important.
- If you don't fall asleep within about 20 minutes of going to bed, don't lie there worrying about not sleeping. Get up and do a relaxing activity in another room.
- For one hour before you go to sleep, avoid strenuous exercise, bright lights, and screen time.
- Don't eat large, heavy, or spicy meals within a couple hours of going to bed.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine later in the day, especially before bed.
- If you have trouble sleeping at night, limit naps during the day to no more than 20 minutes, and not late in the afternoon.



This material is for informational purposes only. It does not replace the advice or counsel of a physician or health care professional. BCH makes every effort to provide information that is accurate and timely, but makes no guarantee in this regard. You should consult with, and rely on the advice of your physician or health care professional.

Last reviewed: 08/2025

Ideas to Help You Sleep

- Try to be physically active every day when possible.
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.
- Before you go to bed, take a hot bath or use relaxation techniques (e.g. deep breathing). Some apps that may help you to relax include Headspace, Calm, and CBT-i.
- Drink a glass of warm milk or herbal tea before bedtime.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the medications you take since some can interfere with sleep.
- Getting enough exposure to sunlight helps to regulate sleeping patterns. Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day. If possible, wake up with the sun or use very bright lights. Some experts suggest getting an hour of sun exposure each morning, and turning down the lights before bedtime.
- Use white noise to help you relax. A fan works well for this.
- If are told that you snore a lot, or stop breathing for periods when you are sleeping, you should talk to your doctor. You may have sleep apnea which can lead to problems sleeping as well as other conditions.
- Sleep aids and melatonin supplements may help short-term, but have not been shown to be helpful for long-term use.



This material is for informational purposes only. It does not replace the advice or counsel of a physician or health care professional. BCH makes every effort to provide information that is accurate and timely, but makes no guarantee in this regard. You should consult with, and rely on the advice of your physician or health care professional.

Last reviewed: 08/2025