May 2014

Tips For Getting A Good Night's Sleep

Like eating well and being physically active, getting a good night's sleep is vital to your well-being. Here are 13 tips to help you:

Stick to a sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on the weekends.

Exercise is great, but not too late in the day. Try to exercise at least 30 minutes on most days but not later than two to three hours before your bedtime.

Avoid caffeine and nicotine. The stimulating effects of caffeine in coffee, colas, certain teas, and chocolate can take as long as eight hours to wear off fully. Nicotine is also a stimulant.

Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed. A nightcap might help you get to sleep, but alcohol keeps you in the lighter stages of sleep. You also tend to wake up in the middle of the night when the sedating effects have worn off.

Avoid large meals and beverages late at night. A large meal can cause indigestion that interferes with sleep. Drinking too many fluids at night can cause you to awaken frequently to urinate.

Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep, if possible. Some commonly prescribed heart, blood pressure, or asthma medications, as well as some over-the-counter and herbal remedies for coughs, colds, or aller-gies, can disrupt sleep patterns.

Don't take naps after 3 p.m. Naps can boost your brain power, but late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night. Also, keep naps to under an hour.

Relax before bed. Take time to unwind. A relaxing activity, such as reading or listening to music, should be part of your bedtime ritual.

Take a hot bath before bed. The drop in body temperature after the bath may help you feel sleepy, and the bath can help you relax.

Have a good sleeping environment. Get rid of anything in your bedroom that might distract you from sleep, such as noises, bright lights, an uncom-fortable bed, or a TV or computer in the bedroom. Also, keeping the temperature in your bedroom on the cool side can help you sleep better.

Have the right sunlight exposure. Daylight is key to regulating daily sleep patterns. Try to get outside in natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes each day.

Don't lie in bed awake. If you find yourself still awake after staying in bed for more than 20 min-utes, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.

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See a doctor if you continue to have trouble sleeping. If you consistently find yourself feeling tired or not well rested during the day despite spending enough time in bed at night, you may have a mental health or possibly a sleep disorder. Your family doctor should be able to help you.

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

COMCARE of is a licensed Community Mental Health Center who serves children, adolescents and adults who are in need of mental health or addiction services. Please call 316-660-7540 and start feeling better soon!