

Tips for Getting a Good Night's Sleep

1. Darken your bedroom as much as possible. Light can disrupt your circadian rhythm, the biological clock controlling your sleep/wake cycle. The pineal gland in your brain responds to light and switches off production of melatonin, a hormone that naturally rises after darkness falls to induce sleepiness.
2. Eat a high-protein snack several hours before bed. This provides enough of the amino acid L-tryptophan necessary to produce melatonin and the brain chemical serotonin, a precursor to melatonin.
3. Maintain your normal bedtime. Maintain a consistent schedule of going to bed and getting up at the same time, even on weekends. This assists your body's natural sleep/wake cycle.
4. Go to bed as early as possible. Before electricity came into widespread use, people used to go to bed when darkness fell, and rise with the sun. This natural schedule coincides with our circadian rhythms.
5. Avoid snacking before bed, particularly on grains and sugar. These snack foods raise blood sugar and hinder sleep. Later, when your blood sugar drops, you may wake up and have problems going back to sleep.
6. Avoid caffeine, especially in the afternoon or evening. The effects of caffeine can last long after drinking caffeinated beverages, and interfere with your body's natural sleep pattern.
7. Steer clear of alcohol. The sedative effect of alcohol wears off quickly; you may wake up and be unable to fall back asleep. Drinking alcohol may also stop progression to deeper stages of sleep, during which many of the body's regenerative processes occur.
8. Lose weight. A potentially debilitating disorder called obstructive sleep apnea has been linked to excessive weight. This condition consists of snoring accompanied by gaps in breathing, with symptoms of daytime sleepiness or fatigue.
9. Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed. This will reduce the need to go to the bathroom during the night, and the risk of not being able to get back to sleep.
10. Exercise regularly. Daily aerobic exercise of at least 30 minutes is one of the best cures for insomnia. Make it vigorous enough to sweat a little. Don't exercise too close to bedtime however; this may keep you awake.

Source: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2005/11/prweb309029.htm>