



**USF Health**  
Morsani College of Medicine

# **TAMPA GENERAL:** **UNDERSTANDING SLEEP AND** **GOOD SLEEP HABITS**



The exact amount of sleep people need is different for everyone. Most adults feel best when they sleep for about seven to nine hours each night. It's not just about how many hours you sleep – what matters most is waking up feeling rested and full of energy.

## How many people do not get enough sleep?

- About one in three adults (33%) do not get the sleep they need. The amount of sleep needed changes with age.

## Understanding the causes of poor sleep

Many things can make it hard to sleep well. Common reasons include:

- **Sleep disorders:** These can include insomnia (having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, or waking up too early), sleep apnea (when you stop breathing for short periods) and restless legs syndrome.
- **Breathing problems:** Asthma, COPD and other conditions can disrupt sleep.
- **Mental health issues:** Examples include anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- **Brain diseases:** These can include Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.
- **Heart problems:** This includes congestive heart failure.
- **Chronic pain:** Arthritis can disrupt sleep.
- **Hormone changes:** These can include menopause.
- **Medications:**
  - **Heart medications:** They can lower melatonin, a hormone that helps with sleep.
  - **Antidepressants:** They can interrupt sleep.
  - **Steroids:** They can boost energy.
  - **Asthma medications:** They can cause jitteriness.
  - **Pain relievers:** They can have caffeine.

## What happens if you don't get enough sleep?

Not sleeping enough can cause many problems, such as:

- **Trouble thinking:** This includes difficulty remembering things and paying attention.
- **Weaker immune system:** You can become more likely to get sick, and it's harder to recover.
- **Feeling moody:** You're more likely to feel stressed, irritable and anxious.
- **Health issues:** Lack of sleep can cause a higher chance of getting diabetes and heart disease.
- **Less energy:** It's tougher to do daily activities or focus on work.

## What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is made up of habits that help you sleep better. Having a calming bedtime routine and a comfy sleep space can make falling asleep easier, keep you asleep longer and help you wake up feeling good. Sleep is like hitting the reset button on your body!





## How to get a good night's sleep

Here are some ways to sleep better:

- **Go to bed at the same time every night:** Follow the same schedule on weekends and days off.
- **Make your bedroom relaxing:** Keep it cool, dark, quiet and comfortable.
- **Stop looking at screens within one hour of bedtime:** Turn off phones and TVs.
- **Turn on blue-light filters:** Blue light emitted from devices (e.g., phones, tablets, TVs & computers) may keep you awake.
- **Avoid caffeine, nicotine, big meals before bed and going to bed hungry:** These can make it harder to fall and stay sleep.
- **Have a relaxing bedtime routine:** Read a book or take a warm bath.
- **Exercise regularly:** Ideally, do not exercise within three hours of bedtime.
- **Try to keep stress low:** Even a two-minute relaxation exercise can help.
- **Take short naps only if needed:** Avoid naps longer than 20 minutes and within eight hours of bedtime.

## Resources

- CBT-i Coach and Insight Timer — Meditate & Sleep are two free phone applications that have helpful relaxation tools.
- CDC: About Sleep (<https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about/index.html>)
- Cleveland Clinic: Sleep Hygiene (<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/sleep-hygiene>)
- NCBI: The Role of Sleep Hygiene (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4400203/>)
- UpToDate: Insufficient Sleep (<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/insufficient-sleep-definition-epidemiology-and-adverse-outcomes>)
- Mayo Clinic: Sleep Disorders (<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sleep-disorders/symptoms-causes/syc-20354018>)



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