



How to sleep well

Sleep — along with eating, drinking and breathing — is a basic human need. Like these other needs, sleep is a vital foundation for good health and well-being throughout your lifetime. Lack of restorative sleep is linked to conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. If you feel like you're not getting enough sleep, you're not alone. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey found that about 7% to 19% of adults in the United States don't get enough rest or sleep every day.



When you sleep, your body and brain work hard to repair cells, produce hormones and fight illness. When you sleep well, it contributes to feeling better and functioning well when you're awake. Sleep helps us:

- Heal and repair heart and blood vessels
- Maintain a healthy balance of hormones that tells your brain when you're hungry or full
- Promote growth in children and teens
- Recover from workouts
- Form new pathways in the brain to help us learn and remember information
- Enhance learning and problem-solving skills, attention, and the ability to make decisions, and creativity

The amount of sleep you need depends on your age and activity level. The National Sleep Foundation provides guidelines on how much sleep you need at each age.

- 0 to 3 months: 14 to 17 hours
- 4 – 11 months: 12 to 14 hours
- 1 to 2 years: 11 to 14 hours
- 3 to 5 years: 10 to 13 hours
- 6 to 13 years: 9 to 11 hours
- 14 to 17 years: 8 to 10 hours
- 18 to 64 years: 7 to 9 hours
- 65 years and older: 7 to 8 hour

Sleep hygiene is the habits you perform each night to boost your chances of sleeping well. Good sleep hygiene habits include:

- Avoiding stimulants, such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol, close to bedtime
- Daily aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling
- Establishing a regular and relaxing bedtime routine
- Avoiding screen time on phones, e-readers and TV
- Creating a pleasant sleep environment
- Limiting daytime naps

Sources: [nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.nlm.nih.gov)*, [webmd.com](https://www.webmd.com)*, [sciencedaily.com](https://www.sciencedaily.com)*, [sleepassociation.org](https://www.sleepassociation.org)*, [sleepfoundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org)*, [nature.com](https://www.nature.com)*

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