



May is Better Sleep Month - Tips for Getting a Good Night's Rest

May 10, 2017: Anita Bhola, MD, Director Sleep Medicine at Nyack Hospital shares how to spring clean your sleep habits. This year, make spring a season of renewal for your health by improving your sleep. As you enjoy the beautiful weather that May brings, make a resolution to take some simple steps to improve your sleep during Better Sleep Month. Sleeping well can improve your health, mood, relationships and productivity.

Getting enough sleep (7-9 hours for most adults, and 8-10 hours for teens) isn't a luxury. Being short on sleep can make you less alert, impair your memory, put stress on relationships, and increase your risk of car accidents. Long-term health problems related to too little sleep include high blood pressure, diabetes, heart attack, heart failure, or stroke. Lack of sleep can also contribute to obesity, depression, and lower sex drive.

To improve your sleep, try these tips:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This keeps your biological clock in sync. You can't make up for a week of skimpy sleep by sleeping in on the weekend.
- Establish a nighttime routine for yourself to help your body settle down for the night. Choose relaxing activities, such as reading a book (not related to work) or taking a warm bath.
- Sleep in a cool, quiet, dark room, on a comfortable, supportive mattress.
- Keep electronics out of the bedroom—including TVs, laptops, and smartphones.
- Exercise regularly.

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol late in the day—they can interfere with sleep.
- If you're stressed while you try to get to sleep, make a list of all the things you need to do, then give yourself permission to relax.

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, getting to sleep this season may bring extra challenges. Allergies can cause stuffy nose, itchy eyes and sinus irritation make it difficult to breath and that can keep you up. Additionally, for some CPAP users, nasal congestion can make it difficult to use CPAP during this time. Some types of antihistamines can affect sleep. Although they cause initial drowsiness, they may actually impair sleep quality and worsen symptoms of restless legs. Nasal steroids may be a better option. To eliminate pollen from your bedroom, close your window and sleep with the air conditioner on. During peak pollen season, take a shower at night and make sure to wash your hair. Rinse your nose and eyes with saline, and wipe down your eyelids with baby wipes so you don't sleep with pollen everywhere. An air purifier in the bedroom may also help clear away pollen.

For more information about The Sleep Center at Nyack Hospital please visit nyackhospital.org/sleep-medicine.