



Getting a good night's sleep

The truth about sleep and getting older

Many people think that as we age, we need less sleep. In fact, it's our ability to sleep that changes, not our need for it. As we get older, we tend to find it harder to settle down to sleep and stay asleep.

You are not alone!

About 50% of people over 65 years of age say they have trouble sleeping. Here are some tips to help you get a good night's sleep!

- **Keep regular sleep times and a comfortable sleeping space**
Go to bed and get up around the same time every day. Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet. Use a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- **Regular activity**
Regular physical activity and exercise will let your body tire so you sleep better. The best time to exercise is in the morning or afternoon.
- **Keep busy**
Naps will change your nighttime sleeping. Keep busy with different activities during the day. If you must nap, do so for a maximum of 30 to 60 minutes in the afternoon.
- **Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol before bedtime**
Caffeine can affect sleep. Coffee, tea, cola pops, chocolate and some medications contain caffeine. Nicotine and alcohol before bed can also affect the quality of sleep. Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider if you have trouble not having a drink or smoking before bedtime.
- **Wind down before bed**
Give yourself an hour to wind down before going to bed. Try reading, listening to soothing music, enjoying a hot bath or drinking a warm cup of milk before bed to help relax.



- **Avoid beverages and large meals before bed**
Finish eating 2 or 3 hours before bed. Avoid drinking large amounts of fluids 3 hours before bed.
- **Use your bed for sleeping**
Avoid watching television, doing paperwork or computer work in bed. Read in bed for a short time only to help you unwind.

Adapted from Alberta Health Services, Community Health Services – Edmonton