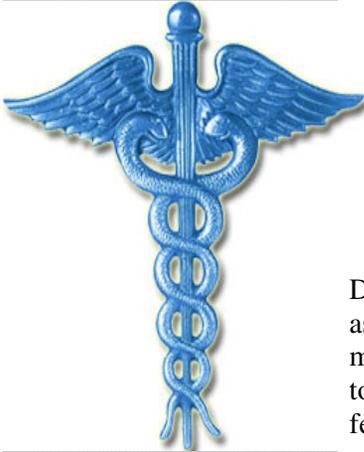


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Delta Health Watch



Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated
Philadelphia Alumnae Chapter
Physical and Mental Health Committee

Getting Better Sleep!

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Do you have trouble falling asleep, or toss and turn in the middle of the night? Awaken too early, or find yourself not feeling refreshed in the morning? You are not alone: millions of people struggle with falling and staying asleep. Unless you're suffering from a serious sleep disorder, simply improving your daytime habits and creating a better sleep environment can set the stage for good sleep. By developing a good bedtime routine and designing a plan that works with your individual needs, you can avoid common pitfalls and make simple changes that bring you consistently better sleep.

Here are some helpful tips:

1. Regular exercise, aside from many other wonderful health benefits, usually makes it easier to fall asleep and sleep better. However, be sure to schedule your exercise in the morning or early afternoon. Exercising too late in the day actually stimulates the body, raising its temperature. That's the opposite of what you want

near bedtime, because a cooler body temperature is associated with sleep. Also, lose weight. Being overweight can increase the risk of sleep apnea, which will prevent a restful nights sleep

2. We all have an internal body clock that helps regulate sleep. This clock is sensitive to light and dark. Light tells your body clock to move to the active daytime phase. When you get up, open the shades or go outside to get some sunlight. If that's not possible, turn on the lights to make your environment bright.

3. Some people can take a short afternoon nap and still sleep well at night. However, if you are having trouble sleeping at night, try to eliminate napping. If you must nap, do it in the early afternoon, and sleep no longer than about thirty minutes.

4. Alcohol reduces overall quality of sleep. Many people think that a nightcap before bed will help them sleep. While it may make you fall asleep faster, alcohol reduces your sleep quality, waking you up later in the night.

5. Smoking causes sleep troubles in numerous ways. Nicotine is a stimulant, which disrupts sleep. Additionally, smokers actually experience nicotine withdrawal as the night progresses, making it hard to sleep.

6. If you rely on coffee, tea or caffeinated soda to keep you going during the day, consider eliminating caffeine after lunch or cutting back your overall intake. You might be surprised to know that caffeine can cause sleep problems up to ten to twelve hours after drinking it!

7. Create a better sleep environment: Is your bed large enough? Do your mattress, pillows and bedding provide enough support? Is there noise in your bedroom? Is your TV on? Is your room adequately ventilated? Is it too hot or cold?

8. Do you sometimes balance your checkbook propped up on pillows? Or jot down notes for tomorrow's meeting? Reserve your bed for sleep and sex, not work!

9. Keep a regular bedtime schedule, including weekends.

10. Check your prescription medication schedule, they may be keeping you up at night.

Inside this issue:

- Getting Better Sleep
- Foods that Promote or Hinder Sleep
- How to Prepare for Sleep

Previous topics:

February: Heart Health

March:
Empowering Women

April: Nutrition

Upcoming topics:

June:
Comprehensive Quiz

FOODS THAT HELP YOU SLEEP



Maybe a rich, hearty dinner, topped off with a big slice of chocolate cake might seem like the perfect way to end the day, but it's wise not to eat a large meal within two hours of bed. Try to make dinnertime earlier in the evening, and avoid heavy, rich foods as bedtime snacks. However, a light snack before bed, especially one that contains the amino acid tryptophan, can help promote sleep. When you pair tryptophan-containing foods with carbohydrates, it helps calm the brain and allow you to sleep better. For even better sleep, add some calcium to your dinner or nighttime snack. Calcium helps the brain use and process tryptophan. Some bedtime snacks to help you sleep:

- Glass of warm milk and half a turkey or peanut butter sandwich
- Whole-grain, low-sugar cereal or granola with low-fat milk or yogurt
- A banana and a cup of hot chamomile tea

Foods that interfere with sleep

Too much food. Especially fatty, rich food interferes with sleep. These take a lot of work for your stomach to digest and may keep you up. Spicy or acidic foods in the evening can cause stomach trouble and heartburn, which worsens as you are laying down

Too much liquid. Drinking lots of fluid may result in frequent bathroom trips throughout the night.

Alcohol. Although it may initially make you feel sleepy, alcohol can interfere with sleep and cause frequent awakenings. Also some people are also sensitive to tyrosine, found in certain red wines

Caffeine. Avoid food and drinks that contain caffeine, and that doesn't just mean coffee. Hidden sources of caffeine include chocolate, caffeinated sodas, and teas.

Preparing for Sleep & Staying Asleep

- Reading a light, entertaining book or magazine
- Visualization/meditation/ prayer/journaling
- Listening to soft music or radio broadcast
- Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed. When body temperature is raised in the late evening, it will fall at bedtime, facilitating sleep.
- Go to the bathroom right before bed. This will reduce the chances that you'll wake up to go in the middle of the night
- Avoid using loud alarm clocks. It is very stressful on the body to be awoken suddenly. If you are regularly getting enough sleep, they should be unnecessary.
- A light bedtime snack or a glass of warm milk
- Remove the clock from view. It will only add to your worry when constantly staring at it... 2 a.m. ...3 a.m. ... 4:30 a.m. ...
- If you are menopausal or perimenopausal, get checked out by a good natural medicine physician. The hormonal changes at this time may cause problems if not properly addressed.
- Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed. This will reduce the likelihood of needing to get up and go to the bathroom or at least minimize the frequency.