Sleep Hygiene:
Good Habits for Better Sleep

Daytime Tips

- Wake up the same time every day. Set an alarm if you have to.
- Get out of bed right after you wake up. Too much time spent on bed can lead to more waking up at night.
- Limit daytime naps. They can make sleep at night more difficult.
- Eat regular, healthy meals. Eat at the same time every day. Three to four small meals are better than 1-2 large meals.
- Do not drink coffee, tea, sodas or cocoa after noon. They contain caffeine and can interfere with normal sleep.
- Do not drink alcohol after dinner. It may help you fall asleep faster, but makes sleep shallower later in the night. Alcohol can also make snoring and sleep apnea worse.
- Use caution when taking headache and cold medicines. Some contain stimulants that can affect sleep.
- Stop smoking. Cigarette smoking stimulates the body and makes sleep difficult.
- Increase or start doing daily exercise. Regular exercise helps to deepen sleep. The best time to exercise is early in the morning. Avoid heavy exercise 2 hours before sleep.

Nighttime Tips

- Get into bed only when you are sleepy.
- Do not use over-the-counter medications. They may help you fall asleep faster, but they do not help you get deeper sleep. They can also make snoring and sleep apnea worse.
- Develop a sleep ritual. Do something relaxing before bed such as a reading or listening to music. This tells your body that it is time to settle down.
- A warm shower or bath an hour before bedtime can help you to fall asleep.
If you tend to worry about things while lying in bed, make an effort to do your worrying outside of bed. Before going to the bedroom, make a list of things to deal with tomorrow.

If you are hungry at bedtime, eat a small snack or drink a glass of milk. Do not eat sugar snacks or chocolate or drink tea or coffee. Large meals before bedtime can worsen sleep.

Use your bed only for sleep or sexual activity. Do not do anything else in bed such as reading, watching TV, arguing, catching up on work, smoking, etc.

Keep the bedroom dark and the temperature comfortable.

Block out noise as much as possible. Occasional loud noises disturb sleep even in people who cannot remember them in the morning. The hum of a fan can help cover up some noise.

Do not watch the clock and worry about lost sleep. Turn the clock face away.

Do not try to force sleep. If you cannot fall asleep:

- Get out of bed
- Move to another room and watch TV, read or listen to soothing music until you are sleepy.
- Go back to bed.
- If you are still unable to sleep, get out of bed again and repeat the cycle until you are able to sleep.