

# Healthy Sleep for the College Student



University Health Center

## What Happens During Sleep?

- The body rests & restores its energy levels
- The brain remains active during sleep & cycles between stages
- Stages of sleep:
  - Non-REM (non rapid eye movement) – the body repairs & regenerates tissue, builds bone & muscle, strengthens the immune system
  - REM (rapid eye movement) – dreams occur

## How Much Sleep Do I Need?

- Varies depending on age
- The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adolescents need between **8.5 and 9.5 hours of sleep per night**

## What Affects My Ability to Fall Asleep & Stay Asleep?

Often related to improper sleeping habits such as:

- Caffeinated products such as tea, soda, chocolate, coffee, & Excedrin
- Tobacco – this stimulates your brain & raises heart rate & blood pressure
- Alcohol – may enable you to fall asleep quickly, but then wake up often through the night

- Eating a heavy meal prior to bedtime or going to bed hungry eat a light snack high in carbohydrates such as warm milk, turkey, bread, crackers, or cereal
- Strenuous exercise before going to bed
- Bright lights and/or noise in the bedroom
- Temperature in the bedroom (too hot or too cold)

## Keys to Getting a Good Night's Sleep

- Maintain regular bed & wake times schedules. On the weekends, DO NOT sleep more than 2-3 hours past the regular wake time on the weekdays
- NO napping – it disrupts the sleep cycle
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as reading, soaking in a hot bath, or listening to music
- Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, cool, & comfortable
- Use your bed only for sleeping. No watching tv or reading in bed
- Sleep on a comfortable mattress & pillows
- Try using a noise machine or fan to block out disruptive sounds
- Exercise regularly, but DO NOT workout within 3 hours of bedtime
- Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before bedtime. Restrict drinking

fluids before bedtime to prevent nighttime awakenings

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, & tobacco close to bedtime
- Avoid pulling an “all-nighter” to study. Sleep will help you think more clearly, react quickly & create memories



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