



SENIOR HEALTH

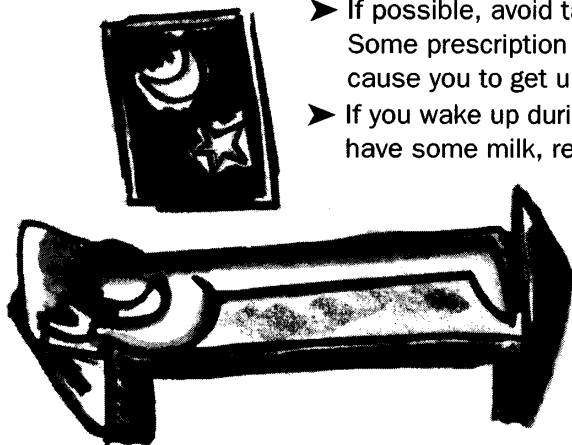
Insomnia

TIPS TO HELP YOU SLEEP

Sleep patterns change as we age. It takes longer to fall asleep, sleep is not as deep and waking up during the night is more common. Use the following tips to help you get the rest you need.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ▶ Follow a routine. Try to always go to bed and get up at the same times.
- ▶ Keep a record of your sleeping patterns. Write down when you go to bed, what time you fall asleep, what times you wake up and what wakes you up.
- ▶ Stick to calming activities before bedtime.
- ▶ Avoid suspenseful movies or books right before bed.
- ▶ Take a warm bath or shower before going to bed.
- ▶ Note what you consume during the day; include the medications you take.
- ▶ Avoid any caffeine after lunch time.
- ▶ Try not to take naps during the day. Naps can decrease your quality of sleep at night.
- ▶ Avoid drinking more than one or two alcoholic beverages with dinner or afterward. Although alcohol is a sedative, it can interfere with sleep.
- ▶ Eat foods rich in L-tryptophan, such as milk, turkey and tuna, and carbohydrates, such as cereals, breads and fruits. Drinking warm milk right before bed also works for some people.
- ▶ Exercise regularly. Exercise is important for a good night's sleep. However, you should avoid exercising within a few hours before you go to bed.
- ▶ Keep your bedroom dark, quiet and at a comfortable temperature. Use a comfortable pillow and mattress.



- ▶ If possible, avoid taking medications right before bedtime. Some prescription and over-the-counter medications may cause you to get up during the night to go to the bathroom.
- ▶ If you wake up during the night, get out of bed. Walk around, have some milk, read a book or listen to music.
- ▶ Practice relaxation techniques.
- ▶ Wear earplugs and eye shades to block out noise and light.
- ▶ Go to bed only when you feel sleepy.
- ▶ Write down your worries before you go to bed and think about them in the morning.