

# Sleep Promotion Recommendations

## Enhance Circadian Rhythm:

- Wake up at the same time every day. Ideally, also go to bed at the same time every day, but only go to bed when you are adequately tired to fall asleep.
- Expose yourself to bright light (natural is best if possible) when you first wake up (at ideal regular wake up time).

## Increase Sleep Drive:

- Use your bed for only sleep and sexual activity to help train your brain that if you are in your bed, you should be sleeping.
- If you are not able to fall asleep within *what feels* like 15-20 minutes (do not watch the clock) or if you start to feel worried/anxious about not sleeping, get out of bed, go to another room (if possible), and do relaxing activity (i.e. listen to audiobook or music). Return to bed when sleepy.
  - If unable to leave the bed due to limited mobility or safety concerns, do relaxing activity in bed until sleepy.
- Avoid/limit daytime napping so that you are sleepy at night and can fall asleep easily.
  - If you need to take a nap, limit to 20-30 minutes, and nap earlier in the day. Set an alarm if needed.
  - Avoid napping in the evening, if possible.
  - If you nap, you may need to delay your bedtime at night until you are adequately sleepy to fall asleep easily.
- Be physically active during the day. Talk to your physical therapist about how to safely increase your physical activity if needed. Being very active close to bedtime may interfere with your sleep.

## Reduce Pre-Sleep Arousal

### *In general:*

- Practice relaxation techniques periodically during the daytime (deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation).
- Practice being in the present moment (mindfulness).

### *Before bed:*

- Develop a relaxing bedtime routine. This may include taking a bath, reading a book, journaling, meditation, deep breathing and/or progressive muscle relaxation.
- Avoid stimulating activities before bedtime (such as watching TV, being on electronic devices, or discussing a stressful topic).
- Stop using light-emitting electronics held close to your eyes (i.e. smartphone, tablet) at least 1 hour before bedtime as the blue light that is emitted can disrupt sleep by suppressing melatonin production. Also, the content being viewed on the electronics can be stimulating or engage you longer than you intended.
- Avoid caffeinated foods and drinks at least 4 hours before bedtime (includes most tea, coffee, chocolate, soft drinks). Check the presence of caffeine in your drink, food, and medicines by reading the label. De-caffeinated items still contain some caffeine.
- Refrain from drinking alcohol or smoking at least 3 to 4 hours before bedtime. Although alcohol may relax you before bedtime, it can increase the number of times you wake up during the night and can cause you to wake up early. Also, nicotine is a stimulant that can cause difficulty falling asleep.
- Avoid eating a large meal or spicy food 2-3 hours before going to bed. Your digestive system slows down while you are sleeping, which can stimulate acid secretions that cause heartburn. A light snack may be helpful if you are hungry. Avoid excessive liquid 2-3 hours before bedtime but stay adequately hydrated.

## Make Environment Conducive to Sleep:

- Make your sleeping environment as dark as possible. Darkness tells your brain it is time to sleep; light tells your brain it is time to wake up. Consider light-blocking curtains or an eye mask if needed.
- Turn your clock around or remove the clock from your bedroom so you are not tempted to stare at the clock. This may also reduce the light in your bedroom.
- Reduce/eliminate noise. Use ear plugs or a white-noise machine if needed.
- Keep the temperature comfortable. Being too warm or cold may disturb your sleep.
- Use a comfortable and supportive pillow and mattress.