

Dealing with Problems Sleeping



Recovery from alcohol and drug use can cause many symptoms. These often are from the body's attempts to repair the brain and other organs. Problems sleeping, also called insomnia, is a common symptom. You may have:

- Trouble falling asleep
- Problems staying asleep
- Early waking
- Changes in sleep patterns such as:
 - ▶ Sleeping for long periods at a time
 - ▶ Going for days without feeling a need for sleep
 - ▶ Sleeping at different times of the day
- Unusual or disturbing dreams, often about using

Here are some things you can do to help:

- Set a regular bedtime and wake up time and follow this on the weekends, too.
- Make your sleeping space comfortable, quiet, dark, cool and well ventilated.
- Use your bed for sleep and sex, not watching TV or eating.
- Place your clock out of sight to avoid anxiety about the time.
- Take time to relax before bedtime. Spend time in a quiet activity. Try to read, write in a journal, or practice breathing and relaxation exercises. You may want to check at the library or in bookstores for DVDs and CDs of relaxation exercises or guided imagery.
- Take a hot bath or shower 30-60 minutes before bedtime.
- Nap in the daytime for no longer than 20 minutes.
- Exercise early in the day, before dinner.
- Eat a light protein snack before bedtime.
- Avoid beverages with caffeine after 6 PM. Limit the amount of caffeine you take in each day.
- Limit fluids just before bedtime.

- Ask your doctor or counselor about taking synthetic Melatonin before bedtime.
- If you do not fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something relaxing in low light. Watch TV or look at a magazine and then return to bed when you feel sleepy.
- Stop smoking. There is a stimulating effect from nicotine.

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

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- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs, call (614) 293-3191.