



# CONNECTIONS

## LOCAL EFAP NEWS

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### Sleep: Getting a Good Night's Worth (Part 2)

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#### Tips on getting a good night's sleep

Do you wake up feeling refreshed, alert, and ready to meet the challenges of the day? If not, here are some tips to help you get there:

- Keep regular hours. Try to go to bed and wake up around the same time every day, including weekends.
- Develop a "sleep ritual". If you do the same things before you go to bed each night, it will train your body to get ready for sleep.
- Take some time to relax and unwind before you go to sleep. You may try stretching, relaxation exercises, a hot shower or bath, meditation, or a glass of hot milk help you to relax and prepare for sleep. Avoid activities that may be emotionally upsetting a few hours before you go to bed.
- Avoid caffeine and other stimu-

lants (such as pseudoephedrine, an ingredient in many cough and cold medications) in the evening.

- If you are taking a diuretic (such as furosemide or hydrochlorothiazide), take it in the morning. Diuretics increase urination, and this may keep you up at night if you take them later in the day.
- Avoid drinking alcohol right before bedtime. Alcohol can interrupt sleep, leading to a poor quality of sleep.
- If you smoke, consider quitting. Smokers have more trouble falling asleep, and wake up more often during the night than non-smokers.
- Make your bedroom "sleep-friendly". Your room should be kept cool (60-65 F or 16-18 C), dark, and quiet. If you are bothered by the noises around you, try using a pair of foam earplugs, a fan, or a white noise generator to block out the noise.

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**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**

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- Get a comfortable mattress. If you wake up feeling stiff and sore, or if you aren't sleeping as well as you were a year ago, it may be time for a new mattress. A good mattress should gently support all points of your body and give you enough room to move freely.
- Exercise regularly. This can help relieve stress and make it easier for you to sleep. Don't exercise too close to bedtime if you find this makes it harder for you to sleep.
- Don't feel guilty about going to bed - think of sleep as an investment in your health and productivity.
- Avoid watching TV or reading in bed. Your bed should be reserved for sleep and intimacy.
- If you are having trouble sleeping, get out of bed to read or watch TV. Return to bed when you start to feel tired. Try not to look at the clock.

If you try these tips and still find that you're having trouble sleeping, talk to your doctor. You may have a medical condition that is affecting your sleep. Also, check with your pharmacist to find out if the medications you are taking could be affecting your sleep.

## Sleep disorders

If you've tried everything and still don't seem to be getting enough sleep, speak with your doctor. Your sleep problems may be due to a medical condition or one of the medications you are taking. Most sleep problems can be diagnosed and treated safely and effectively.

Some of the most common sleep disorders are:

- Sleep apnea ( a disorder in which people stop breathing for 10 seconds or more, sometimes hundreds of times every night)
- Insomnia (difficulty falling asleep, frequent awakenings during the night, or early awakenings)
- Restless legs syndrome (uncomfortable leg sensations and the urge to move the legs occurring whenever the body is at rest, interrupting sleep)
- Narcolepsy (a chronic brain disorder causing sudden, uncontrollable episodes of sleep at inappropriate times, such as while driving, eating, or talking)
- Periodic limb movements (recurring movements of the legs, feet, and/or toes during sleep, causing sleep interruptions throughout the night)

Most sleep disorders can be safely and effectively treated. Finding and treating a sleep disorder could make a huge difference in your life!



**"On behalf of the Board of Directors & Staff, I wish all our members, retirees and their families a holiday season filled with kindness, peace, & joy, in their truest and highest forms!"**

**Ray Landry, President  
EFAP/North Board**

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