

THIS IS **LIVING WITH CANCER**™

Helping you get a better night's sleep

Since receiving your diagnosis, you may have noticed some changes in your sleep patterns. Sleeping more, less or not at all could be related to stress, pain or treatment-related factors. **It's important to know that while this is normal, not getting enough sleep may impact your physical and mental well-being, especially during treatment.**

These pages offer tips to help you get a better night's sleep. From small lifestyle changes to the way you set up your sleeping environment, you can find what works best for you. As you figure out your routine, it's important to talk with your healthcare team, your friends or your family to discuss any sleep problems you are having and how they may be impacting your day-to-day life.



What's keeping you up at night?

Sleep disorders and sleeplessness in general are common throughout cancer diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. There are many different reasons why you may have trouble sleeping, including:

- Physical changes related to cancer or surgery
- Side effects from treatment(s)
- Changes in your sleeping environment
- Stresses related to cancer
- Other health problems unrelated to your cancer

Before you begin to make any lifestyle changes, you should let your healthcare team know about your sleep history and patterns of sleeplessness.

Creating a sleep-friendly environment

Making your bed and bedroom more comfortable may help you sleep better.

Depending on your treatment schedule or lifestyle, you may sleep in different locations from time to time. These tips may help to create a more sleep-friendly environment, regardless of the location.



FIND A COMFORTABLE ROOM TEMPERATURE

After starting treatment, you may be feeling hotter or colder compared to what you're used to. These changes, along with other treatment-related issues, may be affecting your ability to sleep well throughout the night. It's important to find a room temperature that's comfortable for you.

To help you sleep better, consider setting your room temperature to be slightly cooler. If you're traveling and unable to control the room temperature, it's important to be prepared. This might include packing:

- Layers or a blanket to help you stay warm
- Lighter pajamas or a portable fan to help you stay cool



LIGHT AND SOUND IN YOUR ROOM

Both natural and artificial light in your room may be affecting your sleep. Make sure your room is dark and quiet, and consider using:

- A sleep mask
- Earplugs
- Room-darkening shades or blackout curtains for your windows
- A white noise machine or an app on your phone or tablet

FOR YOUR BED

- Get a mattress or mattress pad and pillows that are comfortable to you
- Change your pillows and pillowcases often. This will help in avoiding dust or buildup of other allergens
- If you share a bed with a partner, talk to them about what they can do to help you sleep better. This might mean keeping the room quiet and comfortable
- It's important to use your bedroom only for sleep. Try to avoid watching TV or eating meals in bed. This can help you make a stronger connection between your bed and sleep

The blue light from your TV, phone, tablet or computer can make it harder to fall asleep at night. If you need to use any of these devices before bed, try using a blue light filter on your screens.

Forming daily habits to sleep better

What you do during the day can affect how well you sleep at night. These daily habits can include what you eat or drink and how often you exercise. **It's important to develop habits that are beneficial for you and your needs.**

NUTRITION

Try to eat your snacks and meals well before your bedtime in order to give your body enough time to digest, so you can sleep better throughout the night. When it gets closer to your bedtime:

- Try not to eat heavier meals
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and caffeine
- Enjoy foods that are higher in tryptophan (an amino acid)

Discuss any changes to your diet with your healthcare team.

EXERCISE

Even the smallest amount of physical activity can help you sleep better. This might include taking a walk, stretching or yoga. When you choose an exercise you enjoy doing, it's important to try and keep at it for at least 20 minutes at a time. But you should also avoid exercising close to your bedtime.

If you can, try to fit exercise on your calendar at least 3 times a week. Talk to your healthcare provider before starting any exercise routine to make sure that it is safe for you.



WELL-BEING

Your sleeplessness may be related to stress. There are ways that can help you clear your mind and make you feel more relaxed before you fall asleep, including:

- Taking a warm bath or shower
- Putting away your electronic devices
- Meditating
- Listening to relaxing music
- Reading a book

Maintaining a routine

Creating a bedtime routine for yourself will signal to your body that it's time for bed. Once you find a routine that works for you, it's important to try to maintain it. This routine might include things like:

- Making a to-do list of things you need or want to do the next day
- Writing in a journal or a diary
- Setting your alarm for the same time every morning

Finding a routine that works for you is important. By keeping the times you fall asleep and wake up consistent each day, it may help your body adjust over time and develop a more regular sleep-wake cycle.

As you figure out your routine, it may also be helpful to talk to your friends and family about any sleep problems you are having.



Your bedtime checklist

Use this checklist to help you start a bedtime routine or whenever you may be traveling. Check off each of the relevant items before you get into bed so you can have a more restful night. If you want, you can print this page out to keep by your bedside.

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

- Spent time relaxing
- Exercised during the day
- Set my bedroom to a comfortable temperature
- Made adjustments to the lighting in my room
- Set an alarm for tomorrow morning

OTHER ROUTINES

Your routine may include other steps to help you fall asleep. Add any additional tips you follow below and check them off each night.

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