

Sleep hygiene for cancer patients



Sleep hygiene is evidence-based practices that are done throughout the day and before bedtime that help create the ideal conditions for restful and healthy sleep.

Set a consistent sleep schedule

Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday (give or take 20 minutes)

Including days off, weekends and vacations. Try not to nap during the day as this can kilter off your routine!



Get regular exercise each day

Being physically active during the day or at least 3 hours before bedtime can help you fall asleep more easily and deeply.



Create a relaxing bed-time routine

Try and give yourself 1-1.5 hours to wind down before going to sleep. Having a bath, reading a book or listening to an audio-book in another room are good examples of things you can do to help you feel relaxed before you go to your bedroom to sleep.



Try not to force yourself to sleep if you are not sleepy

This will only make you more alert. Try to do a relaxing activity or sit in another dark room, which can help you to become drowsy. This can break the association of bed as a place of frustration and worry (when counting sheep isn't working).



Keep your room cool and comfortable

The ideal room for sleeping is cool, quiet and dark.



Only use the bedroom for sleep, sex and getting dressed

This means no TV, internet browsing, and late-night chats. In doing this, you will train your mind to see your bed as a place of rest and this will strengthen the association between bed and sleep.



Avoid food, drink and stimulants that disrupt sleep

Try to avoid any products containing caffeine (tea, coffee, chocolate, cocoa, soft drinks etc.) 4-6 hours before bedtime as they may keep you awake. Also avoid any alcohol and heavy, spicy or sugary foods and nicotine 4-6 hours before bed as these can affect your ability to stay asleep.

Try to avoid eating a large meal before bed. If you are hungry, have a light and healthy snack.

