

A bedtime story
to help you get a
good night's sleep

Dynacare®



Are you getting enough sleep?

If you are an adult, you should be getting about seven to nine hours of sleep a night. If you don't, you are not alone.

A recent survey shows that Canada is the third most sleep-deprived country in the world – with nearly a third of us feeling like we don't sleep enough.

We know that getting a good night's sleep makes us feel good – but the truth is, we can't live without it. Animal studies show that rats only survive for about three weeks when they don't sleep.¹

Sleep is also necessary for our nervous system to work properly. Some scientists believe that the neurons we use while we are awake get the chance to shut down and repair themselves when we sleep.

Failing to get enough sleep also impairs our memory, increases our stress hormone levels, disrupts our body's metabolism and affects our hand-eye coordination.

Why do babies and teenagers need so much sleep?

Growth hormones are released in their bodies during deep sleep. That's also why teenagers need more sleep than adults.²

Time to pay up your sleep debt?

Scientists are studying the idea of a "sleep debt" – when getting too little sleep creates a deficit, like being overdrawn at a bank. Eventually you need to repay your debt.



Sleeping comes with benefits

Reduces inflammation. Research indicates that people who get six or fewer hours of sleep have higher blood levels of inflammatory proteins, which can lead to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, arthritis, and premature aging.

Fights stress. Sleep is proven to reduce your stress level, which also allows you to have better control of your blood pressure.³

Improves memory and boosts learning. Harvard research shows sleep-deprived people cannot focus their attention, which means they can't learn efficiently. Sleep also plays a role in the consolidation of memory, which is essential for learning new information.

Enhances physical performance. College football players who caught at least 10 hours of shut-eye in a Stanford University study, had better sprint times and more stamina.

Helps you lose weight. Research at the University of Chicago revealed that dieters who had good sleep habits lost more fat than those who were sleep deprived. Dieters also felt hungrier when they had less sleep.

Puts you in a better mood. Researchers from Tel Aviv University in Israel found that a lack of sleep compromises the brain's ability to tell what's important. That means the smallest of events could cause you to fly off the handle or break down in tears.⁴



Here are 10 science-backed tips to help you get to sleep at night

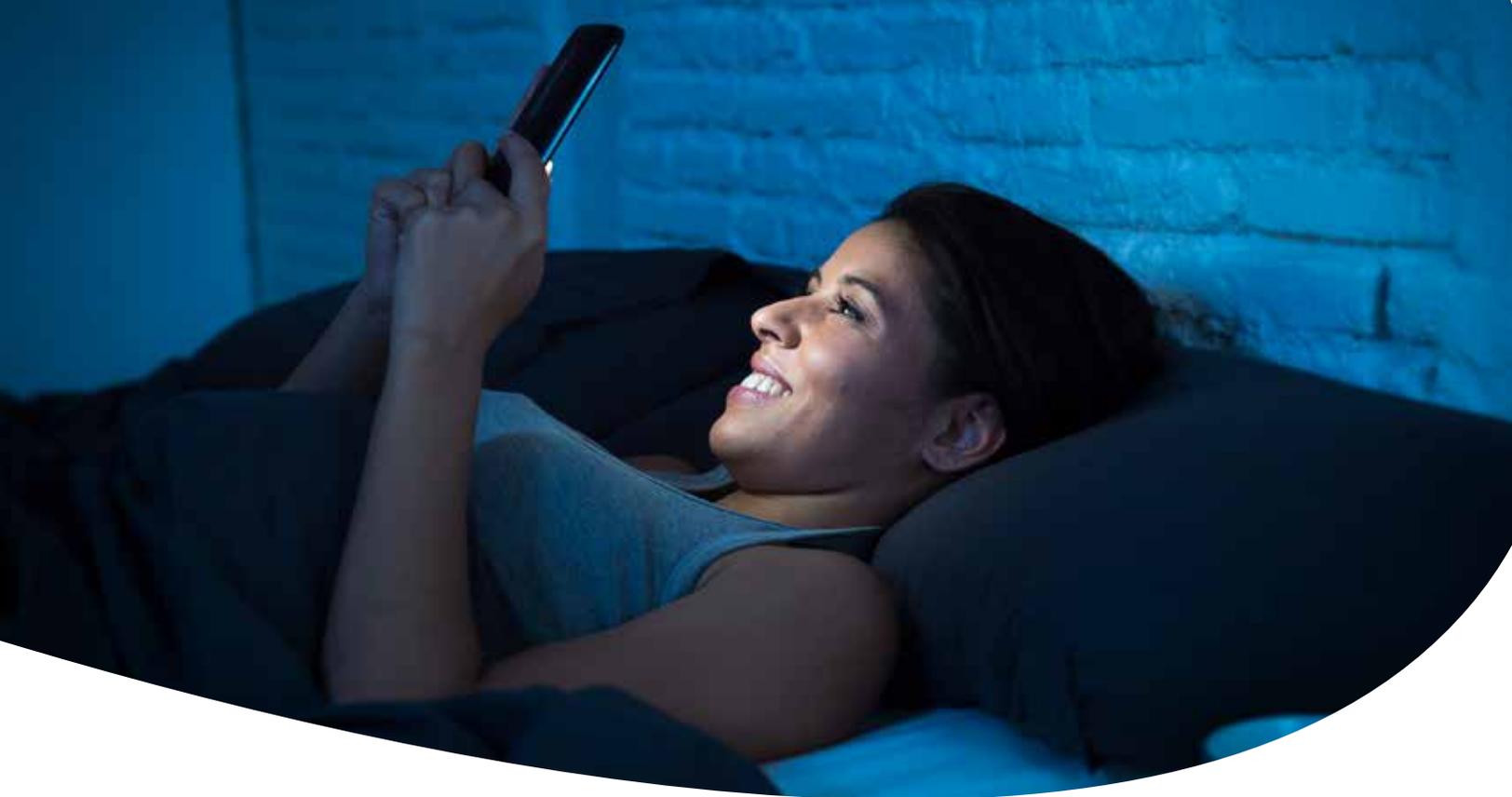
1. **Cut out coffee after 2:00 p.m.** – Caffeine prevents you from getting quality sleep, so consider having caffeine only in the morning and early afternoon. And that's not just coffee and tea. Energy drinks, soft drinks and flavoured waters contain caffeine too.
2. **Don't drink alcohol in the three hours before shut-eye** – While alcohol may help you nod off initially, it can make you wake up throughout the night.
3. **No late night snacks** – Eating two to three hours before bed can make you lethargic, which slows down your ability to fall asleep. A full stomach will also disturb your sleep.

Foods that help you snooze –

A light meal of pasta, vegetables, chicken and tomato sauce contains a combination of protein and tryptophan, an amino acid that converts to sleep-promoting serotonin in your body. Cottage cheese with banana also has tryptophan.⁵



4. **Turn out the lights** – This signals the brain to release melatonin, a sleep-inducing hormone, which will make you feel drowsy and tired.
5. **Make some white noise** – Run a fan or air purifier to create a consistent, ambient sound that blocks out loud noises.



6. **Get to bed at the same time every night** – This regulates your body’s clock. Following the same routine before bed also helps your body and mind get ready for sleep.
7. **Always sleep with the window open** – Even in the dead of winter it’s important to get fresh air. Research shows that a cool room is best for sleep – around 18 degrees Celsius.⁶
8. **Have adequate spine support** – That means sleeping on a good mattress with a pillow that supports your head and neck. When your mattress starts to sag in the middle or at the edges, it’s time to go mattress shopping.
9. **Night shift workers should take a nap** – Humans are a diurnal species, which means our biological clock keeps us awake during the day. Any periods of sleep can be beneficial, however. So if you are working a night shift try to nap before going to work.⁷

10. **Limit screen time before bed** – That includes televisions, computers, smartphones and tablets. A Harvard study showed it took longer to get to sleep when people read an eBook before bed. Their melatonin levels were reduced and they were less alert in the morning.





Don't let these common misconceptions prevent you from sleeping

Napping is bad for you – A short 20 to 30 minute nap can help improve your mood, alertness and performance. There have been many famous nappers throughout history, such as Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison.⁸

There's no such thing as "beauty sleep" – Many of our body's cells increase production when we sleep. Protein breakdown is also reduced, which helps to repair damage from stress and sun.

Not everyone dreams – You spend more than two hours each night dreaming, whether you remember your dreams or not. Dreams almost always occur during REM (rapid eye movement) deep sleep.

Single people sleep less than married people – People living with a partner sleep about eight hours and five minutes a night, while single people sleep eight hours and 29 minutes a night. Men also sleep about 11 minutes less than women.⁹

Never wake a sleepwalker – It can actually be dangerous not to wake a sleepwalker as they can hurt themselves. The best thing to do is lead a sleepwalker back to bed by the elbow.¹⁰



Research never sleeps

To learn more about sleep, here are some links to trusted sources:

Canadian Sleep Society – www.css-scs.ca

World Sleep Day – www.worldsleepday.org

American Sleep Association – www.sleepassociation.org

National Sleep Foundation – www.sleepfoundation.org

So go ahead and shut your eyes! Rest assured that research is being done around the world to help you sleep better.

Goodnight – and have a good sleep!

Reference sources

1. American Sleep Association
2. National Sleep Foundation
3. Raymonde Jean, MD, Director of Sleep Medicine - St. Luke's - Roosevelt Hospital Center, New York City
4. The Journal of Neuroscience
5. Joan Salge Blake, RD and clinical associate professor - Boston University
6. Dr. Carl Cricco, physician and surgeon - National Sleep Foundation
7. Canadian Sleep Society - American Sleep Association - National Sleep Foundation
8. National Sleep Foundation
9. Public Health Agency of Canada – Heart and Stroke Foundation
10. California Center for Sleep Disorders - American Sleep Association

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