

Why is sleep so important when living with depression, bipolar disorder, and related illnesses? Sleep helps restore both brain and body. Sleep has been shown to help keep the body's immune system strong, and can also help regulate moods and reduce stress. Maintaining good habits for restful, effective sleep – sometimes called good *sleep hygiene* – is crucial for managing your mental health.

Tips for better sleep

Daily Activities

- Get outside and exercise during the daytime, but avoid energetic or stressful activities in the evening.
- Maintain a regular meal schedule. Limit caffeine.
- Avoid naps.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco.



Evening and bedtime routine: establishing a sleeping schedule

- Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on the weekend.
- Allow at least one hour to unwind before bed.
- Use dim light during your pre-bed routine.
- Don't take medicine that may keep you awake right before bed (ask your doctor about this).
- Don't drink alcohol before bedtime.

Where you sleep can affect how well you sleep

- Sleep only in the bedroom and keep it quiet, dark, and at a comfortable temperature.
- Reserve the bedroom only for sleep and sex - keep TV and other activities out.
- If you need a nightlight, use a red bulb.
- Consider a sleep mask, earplugs, or a “white noise” machine to block out noise.

When it is hard to fall asleep or stay asleep:

- Go to another room and do a quiet or boring activity until you feel very sleepy.
- Try a relaxation technique. Find some ideas in the Depression Center Toolkit!

For more information:

- University of Michigan Depression Center
- 1-800-475-MICH or 734-936-4400
- <http://www.depressioncenter.org/toolkit>

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