

# What to do when anxiety affects your sleep

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In these days where there is high anxiety around COVID-19, getting your sleep isn't easy. But a good night's sleep is a key factor in maintaining your health and protecting your immune system.

"Sleep is so important. It can make you happier and healthier," says Jenny Prinsen, a pulmonology nurse practitioner at Mayo Clinic Health System in Southwest Wisconsin. "It's your [time](#) to recharge, so make it a priority."

## Sleep Challenges

There are several factors that can affect your [sleep](#).

-Snoring. Almost half of adult men and one-quarter of women snore. You can reduce snoring by using adhesive nose pads to open the nostrils, adjusting your pillow to open your airway, and sleeping on your side rather than your back.

-Caffeine intake. Caffeine may affect your sleep. Be mindful of hidden sources of caffeine in foods, beverages and medications. Even if you fall asleep, too much caffeine can affect the quality of your sleep.

-Challenges of parenting. Between 3 a.m. feedings and late-night cries, new parents might only get to sleep for a few hours here and there. Try snoozing whenever you put your infant down to sleep.

## Tips To Sleep Better

The quality of your sleep is just as important as the quantity. You can be in bed for eight hours and still feel drowsy the next day if your sleep is frequently interrupted during the night.

Try these tips to sleep better:

- Create an ideal sleep environment. Your sleep space should be dark, quiet, comfortable and cool. Think about using dark shades, earplugs, eyeshades, and subtle background noise such as humidifiers or fans.
- Follow a sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, including weekends. Consistency reinforces your body's sleep-wake cycle and promotes better sleep.
- Give yourself time to unwind. Create a relaxing routine before bedtime. Consider taking a warm bath or shower, reading a book or listening to soothing music. You also might try meditation or prayer to relax.
- Turn off the screens. Dedicate 30 to 60 minutes before you go to sleep as time away from your electronic devices. Minimizing the bright light exposure gives your brain the time it needs to get sleepy.
- Use your bed for sleep. Don't eat, work, use your phone, watch TV or do anything in bed that may keep you from relaxing and getting good sleep.
- Get [regular physical activity](#). Regular physical activity can promote better sleep by helping you fall asleep faster and enjoy deeper sleep. Exercise earlier in the day, if possible.
- Avoid caffeine. Avoid consuming [caffeine](#) 10 hours before you want to fall asleep and

avoid alcohol before bed, as it disrupts sleep.

If you follow these tips and still find yourself constantly craving sleep and feeling fatigued, talk to your [health care provider](#) to make sure that there isn't an underlying sleep disorder.

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