

Use the bed for sleep only

- ❑ Do not look at your smart phones, television or work materials in your bed. These unhealthy habits result in learning to associate our bed with being awake and alert. Instead try to limit the bed to sleep only.

If you cannot sleep, get out of bed

- ❑ If you cannot fall asleep after 20 minutes or are awake during the night for more than 20 minutes, leave the bed and engage in a quiet activity (e.g. reading or crossword puzzles). Trying too hard to sleep will often backfire, making you more anxious and less likely to sleep. It is better to leave the bed and distract yourself. Return to bed when you feel sleepy.

Addressing Sleep Issues

In response to a growing need to address sleep issues, we hope you find this information helpful. If you have sleep problems that persist after trying these tips, talk to your doctor about further evaluation and treatment options. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), a short term evidence-based treatment for sleep, may be an option.

Saint John Vianney Center addresses sleep as part of our Residential treatment, in our Outpatient counseling services, and as part of our workshops for dioceses and religious communities on self-care and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Contact us for more information.

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Ten Tips for Healthy Sleep

1. Keep your bedroom quiet, cool, and comfortable.
2. Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed.
3. Exercise regularly but not before bed.
4. Avoid eating a heavy meal before bed.
5. Wait until you are sleepy before going to bed. Trying to force yourself to sleep before your body is ready will prolong sleeplessness.
6. Only use the bed for sleep.
7. Avoid worrying in bed. If needed, devote 20 minutes to planning and worrying the next day (but not close to bedtime).
8. Don't stare at the clock in bed (Instead turn the clock's face away from you).
9. Get out of bed upon awakening in the morning. Avoid prolonged periods of lying in bed. "Resting" will not help your sleep.
10. Get as much natural light as possible during the day. Take walks outside if possible during the day hours.

How to Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle



Saint John Vianney Center

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"In peace I will lie down and fall asleep, for you alone, Lord, make me secure."

PSALM 4:9



Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle

Research estimates that 30% of adults in the United States have experienced short-term problems with sleep while 10% struggle with chronic sleep problems. Insomnia is a sleep disorder characterized by problems falling asleep, staying asleep, or both. Unfortunately, our culture glorifies sleep deprivation as a sign of strength and dedication. How many times have you heard someone boasting about how they are functioning on minimal or little sleep the night before?

Poor sleep is associated with several negative consequences:

- Physically, there is a strong link with obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and mortality.
- Emotionally, there is an increased risk of depression, anxiety, and irritability.
- Spiritually there is an association with reduced ability to resolve moral dilemmas and decreased creativity.

Fortunately, there are several steps we can take to improve our sleep.

Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed

- ❑ Caffeine is a stimulant that keeps us awake. Caffeine from coffee, tea, soda, and energy drinks should not be consumed within 4-6 hours before bed.
- ❑ Nicotine is also a stimulant and should be avoided close to bedtime.
- ❑ Many people drink alcohol to facilitate sleep onset. However, alcohol use is associated with an increased number of awakenings and poor quality of sleep. For good sleep, limit alcohol use to 1-2 drinks per day, or less, and avoid drinking within three hours of bedtime.

Engage in an unwinding ritual before bed

- ❑ We need time to gradually transition from wakefulness to sleep. Aim to engage in a relaxing activity before bed, such as meditation, praying, or reading.
- ❑ Avoid engaging in work or having stressful or emotional conversations before bed as this will make it more difficult to relax sufficiently to fall asleep.
- ❑ Try to limit watching the news before bed as this may result in increased stress levels that can also interfere with sleep.

Avoid napping or dozing (falling asleep unintentionally in a chair on the couch).

- ❑ Just like snacking ruins our appetite for our meals, napping reduces our sleep drive (i.e., our biological need for sleep) at night.
- ❑ The longer the nap and the closer it is to bedtime, the more likely we will have trouble falling asleep at night.
- ❑ If you must nap, do so early and keep it short.

Wake up the same time every morning

- ❑ We have an internal sleep clock (circadian process). Going to bed and waking up the same time every day, including weekends, helps keep that clock healthy and regulates our sleep.
- ❑ Sleeping in on days off disrupts our sleep clock and results in a hangover feeling the next day.
- ❑ If you struggle to wake up on days off, set an alarm to maintain your sleep schedule.

