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Sleep Problems and Menopause: What Can I Do?

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The years of the [menopausal transition](#) are often a time when there are other changes in a woman's life. You may be caring for aging parents, supporting children as they move into adulthood, taking on more responsibilities at work, and reflecting on your own life journey. Add symptoms of menopause on top of all this, and you may find yourself having trouble [sleeping at night](#).

[Hot flashes](#), especially night sweats, and changes in mood — [depression](#) in particular — can contribute to poor sleep. Managing these issues may help to manage sleep symptoms as well.

Some women who have trouble sleeping may use over-the-counter sleep aids such as [melatonin](#). Others use [prescription medications](#) to help them sleep, which may help when used for a short time. But these are not a cure for sleep disturbances, such as [insomnia](#), and should not be used long term.



Not getting enough sleep can affect all areas of life.

Lack of sleep can make you feel irritable or depressed, might cause you to be more [forgetful](#) than normal, and could lead to more [falls](#) or accidents. And research now suggests that waking from sleep itself may trigger hot flashes, rather than the other way around.

Developing healthy habits at bedtime can help you get a good night's sleep.

Study of Women's Health Across the Nation

Learn more about [sleep problems and menopause in this fact sheet](#) (PDF, 122KB) that covers findings from the NIH-funded Study of Women's Health Across the Nation.

Getting a good night's sleep during the menopausal transition

To improve your sleep through the menopausal transition and beyond:

- **Follow a regular sleep schedule.** Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day.

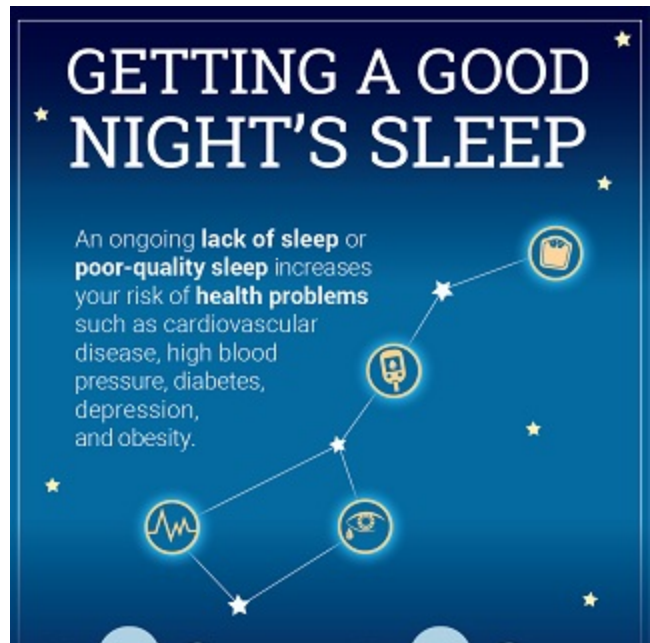
- **Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening** if you can. It may keep you awake at night.
- **Develop a bedtime routine.** Some people read a book, listen to soothing music, or soak in a warm bath.
- **Try not to watch television or use your computer or mobile device in the bedroom.** The light from these devices may make it difficult for you to fall asleep.
- **Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature**, not too hot or too cold, and as quiet as possible.
- **Exercise at regular times each day** but not close to bedtime.
- **Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime.**
- **Stay away from caffeine** (found in many coffees, teas, and chocolate) late in the day.
- **Remember, alcohol won't help you sleep.** Even small amounts make it harder to stay asleep.

Talk to your doctor if you are having trouble sleeping. If these changes to your bedtime routine don't help as much as you'd like, you may want to consider cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia. This problem-solving approach to therapy has been shown to help improve sleep in women with menopausal symptoms. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be found through a class or in one-on-one sessions. Be sure that your therapy is guided by a trained professional with experience working with women during their menopausal transition. Your doctor may be able to recommend a therapist in your area.

Learn more about [getting a good night's sleep as you age](#).

You may also be interested in

- Learning about [hot flashes and menopause](#)
- Exploring information on [sex and menopause](#)
- Watching this [video on the symptoms of menopause](#)



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For more information on menopause and sleep

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