

## Healthy Sleep Habits for Managing Headaches

Pain and sleep are linked – the more pain you have, the harder it is to sleep, and the more sleep you lose, the more pain you have (or the more likely it is that you will get a headache). Working on healthy sleep habits is important for your overall health and especially for headache management. Try some of these actions to set up good sleep habits.

### What should you do?

- **Develop a bedtime routine – do the same things each night to cue your body that it is time to sleep** (such as a warm bath or shower, read for fun, color or draw)
  - Try to **go to bed at the same time** each night
  - Get up at the same time each morning
- **Exercise regularly**
- Go outdoors to get light and fresh air during the day
- Make sure your room is at a **comfortable temperature**
- Keep your room **dark and quiet** while sleeping (try a white noise machine or app to help block out sound)
- **Only use your bed for sleeping**, not as a place to do homework, use electronic devices, or be restless (see below)
- Do some **relaxation exercises** before bed
- Make sure you get **enough sleep at night**.
  - Children ages 6-12 should sleep 9-12 hours per night
  - Teens ages 13-18 should sleep 8-10 hours per night

### What should you avoid?

- Take naps during the day
- Do something exciting right before bed (watch a suspenseful TV show, play video games, get into an argument with family or friends)
- Have caffeine after lunch time
- Use screens within 30 minutes of going to bed
- Watch TV or use any electronics in bed
- Go to bed too hungry or too full
- Look at your alarm clock; instead, turn it away from your bed so you cannot see it

### What should you do if you cannot fall asleep?

- If you are restless in bed for more than 20 minutes, get up. **Your bed is for sleeping, not restlessness!**
- Sit in a dimly lit area
- Do something **calming** and not too engaging (color, word search, read something boring)
- Spend about 10 minutes out of bed and/or until you feel “sleep pressure” (feel like you *need* to go to sleep—eyes feeling heavy, yawning, and so on)
- Then get back into bed
- If you don't fall back to sleep in about 10-20 minutes, repeat

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