

## Sleep to Promote Heart Health

Getting adequate sleep each night not only helps you to be focused and active the next day, but it also helps ensure your heart stay healthy. While each of our bodies may require slightly different amounts of sleep, research suggests adults need about 8 – 10 hours of sleep each night. However, 7 may be adequate if you get enough “deep” sleep. With busy schedules, you may feel left with not enough time to sleep. Regardless of how busy you are, it is important to prioritize a good night’s rest as this has both short term and long-term health benefits including a decreased risk of heart disease.

### Sleep Factzzz

- To get high quality sleep, our brains must complete several cycles that include 5 stages, with each cycle lasting about 90 minutes.
- We are in our deepest sleep during the 4th stage. This stage plays an important role in stimulating growth and development, repairing muscle tissue, boosting immunity, and building up energy for the day ahead.
- The last stage or “R.E.M” stage is typically when we dream. Everyone dreams each night, even if you can’t remember your dream!
- If we don’t practice good sleep hygiene, we may not complete enough sleep cycles which may lead to feeling groggy in the morning.
- Consistently sleeping less than the recommended amount of sleep each night may lead to increased risk of high blood

pressure and other heart diseases.

### Good Sleep Habits

- Train your body to associate bed with sleep.
- Go to bed at the same time every night and use your bed for sleeping only. Having electronics or a TV in your room makes your brain think it is still time to be awake.
- If your mind is racing with stressful thoughts or a to-do list, try keeping a journal on your nightstand. Release your mind from these thoughts by writing them down and addressing them later the next day. This may reduce your blood pressure as well.
- Make sure to eat a balanced breakfast, lunch, and dinner, that consist of plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins all with no or minimal added sodium. Also, be mindful of your sugar intake, which may disrupt sleep.
- Include physical activity in your day as regular exercise can promote better sleep. Spending time outside can also be helpful.
- Avoid caffeine 8 – 12 hours before bedtime, as it may disrupt your sleep. Everyone processes caffeine differently, so if you are a heavy caffeine drinker with disrupted sleep consider cutting back to see if it helps. See our tips below.
- Try not to snack less than 2 hours before bedtime as this will cause your metabolism to keep working, breaking down food for energy – which may keep you awake longer.



## Build Your Own Sleepy Tea

### Ingredients

1 – 2 Tbsp total of any of the below herbs per 8 fluid ounces of water:

- Lemon balm
- Dried peppermint
- Chamomile
- Dried lavender
- Dried licorice root
- Passionflower
- Dried rose petals

### Directions

Boil water. Place desired herbs into a tea ball infuser or steep. Gently pour boiling water over herbs and steep 3- 5 minutes.

Provides no significant nutrition facts.

## Stay Energized Without Caffeine



Thinking about cutting back on caffeine but worried about keeping your energy level up? Here are a few tips and tricks to help you stay energized while you cut back.

- #1 - Stay hydrated, mostly with water. When feeling tired throughout the day, drink 8 – 12 fluid ounces of water to help perk you up.
- Stay active. Generally, most people that have regular physical activity feel more energized.
- Eat a balanced diet that is low in added sugar. See Balanced Plate on the right to help as a guide. Eating the right foods can help keep you energized throughout the

day. If you snack, choose foods low in added sugar to avoid sudden drops in energy.

- Get outside and connect with nature. Studies have shown that people that spend time outside feel more energized.
- Take a power nap. This one may not be feasible some days, but it really works!
- Substitute caffeinated beverages with herbal teas like ginseng or peppermint, golden milk, water, sparkling water, smoothies, or kombucha.
- Be sure you are getting adequate B-vitamins, which are required by your body to convert food into energy.

### A Balanced Plate



Sources:

- <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>
- <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/>