

Blue Prints

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Healthy Habits for a Good Night's Sleep

When was the last time you had a good night's sleep? Nearly half of Americans report sleep difficulty at least occasionally, according to a National Sleep Foundation survey. Stress often plays a factor in how well a person is able to sleep at night. But if you're having trouble sleeping, there may be a number of reasons.

Take a look at your diet, health, exercise patterns and lifestyle — as well as your stress level — for clues. Whether you've been sleeping poorly for awhile or occasionally toss and turn at night, sleep soundly with these tips:

Cut caffeine. For a better night's sleep, cut out caffeine at least four to six hours before bedtime.

Avoid alcohol. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it creates a fitful, restless sleep throughout the night.

Monitor your food intake. Too much food, especially fatty, rich food, can affect your sleep. These foods take a lot of work for your stomach to digest and may keep you awake.

Watch your workout times. The timing and intensity of exercise can affect your sleep. If exercise makes you more alert, it's best to work out earlier in the day.

Keep your bedroom dark, comfortable and quiet. Dim the lights and keep out any noisemakers, such as pets or machinery, that might disturb your sleep. At night, keep your room temperature between 68 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

Avoid napping. An afternoon nap can make it harder to fall asleep at night. If you must nap, keep it to a short 15- to 20-minute snooze.

Let the dogs out. Your pets can keep you awake if they sleep with you. Consider putting your dog or cat in another room at night so their movements don't disturb you.

Turn off the TV. Your bed should be associated with sleeping and not watching TV, eating or other distractions.

Avoid fluids after 8 p.m. Drinking fluids late in the evening will cause you to need bathroom breaks during the night.

Source: www.webmd.com; www.nationalsleepfoundation.com



Eat Well, Sleep Well

It turns out your mom was right. A glass of warm milk before bed does help you sleep better. If you're having trouble sleeping, try one of these bedtime snacks:

- Glass of warm milk
- Whole-grain, low-sugar cereal or granola with low-fat milk or yogurt
- A banana and a cup of hot chamomile tea
- Half a turkey or peanut butter sandwich

Other foods that promote sleep: tuna, artichokes, avocados, almonds, eggs, peaches, walnuts, apricots, oats, asparagus, potatoes and buckwheat.

Source: www.helpguide.org



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Your Health. Our Commitment.

www.bcbsla.com

Call Blue Cross for Answers

Have a question about benefits, claims, premium payments, authorizations or grievances? Call our Customer Service number (listed on your ID card) toll-free at 1.800.495.BLUE (2583) for help.

Before we can answer questions, we'll need for you to verify your identity (and/or your dependents, if applicable). Also be prepared to provide the member's name (if different from you), address, phone number and contract number, which is located on your ID card. We're committed to your privacy and use these measures for your protection.

If you're not the member and are calling about a disabled family member, or a family member over the age of 17, you must have an Authorized Delegate Form on file with us before we can release information to you. To obtain an Authorized Delegate Form, go to www.bcbsla.com, click on Customer,

then choose Forms for Members. A Power of Attorney can be submitted if the member is disabled.

If you're calling to request information on deceased members, you must also be prepared to provide key identifiers to show you have legal authority to receive the information. You'll need to fax or mail us a copy of the death certificate or succession papers and disclose the executor of the estate. If there is no executor or succession papers, you must send us a letter stating this fact. The letter must include your relationship to the member, along with the policy number and your signature.

By law, Blue Cross cannot disclose someone else's personal health information to you unless you can provide Customer Service representatives with key identifiers and/or have an Authorized Delegate Form on file with us.

Stay Afloat with Water

There's a reason water is considered a "wonder drug." It's crucial to your health, and every system in your body depends on it.

On average, 60 percent of your body weight consists of water. And to function properly, your body constantly needs to have water restored.

Every breath, activity or trip to the bathroom throughout the day causes you to lose or release water. That's why it's important to keep yourself hydrated. Lack of water can lead to dehydration, affect your digestion and energy and create other health risks.

Dehydration is particularly risky for the young and very old. Signs and symptoms of dehydration include excessive thirst, fatigue, headache and muscle weakness, to name a few.

Drinking enough water lubricates your joints, prevents colds and constipation, and helps to lessen the chance of kidney stones. It's also necessary for your body to digest and absorb vitamins and nutrients. Water also detoxifies the liver and kidneys and carries away waste from the body.

Drinking your eight glasses of water a day (more if you drink coffee or alcohol) will:

- Control hunger and help you lose weight by making you feel more full
- Keep your skin healthy and glowing
- Improve your energy
- Remove toxins from your body
- Reduce headaches and dizziness
- Help your athletic performance by keeping you hydrated

Find it hard to drink eight glasses of water each day? Good news: the food you eat typically provides about 20 percent of your total water intake. The rest comes from beverages of all kinds and is not limited only to water. But for the healthiest kind of refreshment and replenishment, grab a glass of water!

Source: www.shapefit.com

FUN FACT

Did you know your lungs expel between two and four cups of water each day through normal breathing?

Have a question about your coverage?
Call Customer Service at 1.800.495.BLUE
or use the secure web form in the
Customer section at www.bcbsla.com.

5525 REITZ AVENUE
BATON ROUGE, LA 70809-3802



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