

# Get your best night's sleep ever!

Did you know that how well you sleep can affect your blood sugar levels? In fact, a study in *Diabetes Care* showed that those with type 2 diabetes who slept too little or too much—fewer than 4.5 hours or more than 8.5 hours—had higher A1Cs, greater insulin resistance and higher rates of obesity. If you have sleep challenges, talk to your healthcare provider and ask if these strategies can help.

## Prevent overnight highs and lows.

When blood sugar is too high it can lead to more frequent trips to the bathroom, disrupting your sleep. If blood sugar drops too low, it can wake you up or cause sweating and even nightmares. If you have these issues, discuss it with your care team. You may need a change in your medicine regimen and/or your eating and exercise routine.

## Combat restless legs.

People with diabetes are more prone to restless legs syndrome, which is when you feel like you need to frequently move your legs. It can be particularly bad at night, making it difficult to fall or stay asleep. Not smoking, stretching before bed and taking a soothing bath may also help relieve the sensation.

## Treat sleep apnea.

This disorder—in which a person's breathing repeatedly pauses and restarts during sleep—is more common in people with diabetes. Symptoms include loud snoring and waking up abruptly with shortness of breath. If you suspect you have it, ask your doctor about doing a sleep study. Losing weight and using a special breathing machine at night can help the problem.

## Get moving.

Regular exercise can lower blood sugar levels and help you get more restful sleep. Aim for 30 minutes most days of the week, but avoid exercising just before bed, which can keep you up. Bonus: A walk right after eating can help lower post-meal blood sugar levels.

## Set the stage for sound sleep.

Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet, which has been shown to help people get to sleep faster and stay asleep longer. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, including on weekends, and make your room a distraction-free zone by turning off the TV and putting phones away several hours before bed. Looking at bright light, especially the blue light in electronics, can disrupt sleep and increase insulin resistance, according to a study in the journal *PLoS One*.

### Had a bad night's sleep?

Guard against overeating, which is linked to not getting enough zzz's. Watch portion sizes and eat nutritious high-protein snacks throughout the day to cut down on cravings.

## Limit caffeine and alcohol at night.

Alcohol can contribute to sleep apnea while caffeine can interfere with your ability to get to sleep. If an evening beverage is part of your bedtime routine, try herbal or decaffeinated tea.

## Reach for relaxation.

Stress can release the hormone cortisol, which can worsen diabetes and make it harder to sleep. Create a calming atmosphere before bed by practicing meditation, doing gentle yoga or listening to soothing music.

## Shed extra pounds.

Along with improving blood sugar levels, losing weight can reduce snoring and sleep apnea. It can also improve acid reflux and back pain, two common culprits of poor sleep. 

