

# Diabetes & Sleep Health

Untreated sleep disorders and chronic sleep loss can be associated with an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, anxiety, and depression.

## Common Sleep Disorders in People with Diabetes

- **Sleep apnea** is a potentially serious sleep disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts. If you snore loudly and feel tired even after a full night's sleep, you may have sleep apnea. Studies have shown there may be a link between sleep apnea and insulin resistance.
- **Peripheral neuropathy** (damage to the nerves in the feet and legs) is another cause of sleep disruption. Symptoms include a loss of feeling in the feet, tingling, numbness, burning, and pain.
- **Restless leg syndrome** causes an intense urge to move your legs. These disorders may be accompanied by sensations in the legs such as tingling, pulling, or pain. They can make it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep.

***If you are experiencing disordered sleep patterns, seek the advice of your healthcare team.***



## Tips for good sleep habits

- Keeping blood sugar in a set target range and reducing highs and lows can positively affect sleep quality.
- Set a nightly sleep goal of 7-9 hours; limit naps to 20 minutes during the day.
- Keep a bedtime routine. Following a sleep schedule assists the body's internal clock.
- Turn off electronic devices 30-60 minutes before bedtime. Bright light from electronic devices can disrupt sleep patterns.
- Limit alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine intake, especially in the evening. These can disturb metabolism, cause dehydration, and result in excess trips to the restroom – all factors that can disturb a good night's sleep.
- Exercise during the day. Physical activity is necessary for all people. It raises the body's internal temperature and slowly lowers it again over 5-6 hours, helping drift off to sleep.
- Practice meditation, relaxation, and/or deep breathing techniques. Stress can affect sleep, and finding ways to alleviate stress can help improve sleep amount and quality.

*References: National Institutes of Health; National Institutes of Health Sleep Disorders Research Plan; Everyday Health; WebMD*