

Sleep Better with these Healthy Night-CAP Tips

We've all had those nights when we wake up, look at the alarm clock, and realize we still have a few hours before needing to get up. The only problem? We can't fall back asleep. With Daylight Saving Time underway, getting a good night's sleep can be even harder, so we reached out to Carilion Clinic Psychologist Barbara Hutchinson for advice.

Dr. Hutchinson has some easy tips to help you snooze better, called her "healthy night-CAP."

C - Create a Soothing Sleep Environment:

- Keep your bedroom cool (60-69 F), quiet, dark and distraction free
- Turn off or remove electronics (blue light tricks the brain into thinking it's daylight)
- Utilize sound machines or ear plugs to drown out noise
- Make sure your four-legged friends sleep in their own beds, not yours
- Develop a relaxing bedtime routine - leave time to relax, do breathing exercises, or mindful meditation

A - Avoid:

- Caffeine (6-8 hours before bed)
- Alcohol (4-6 hours before bed)
- Nicotine
- Food (do not eat large meals before bed, a light snack is okay)
- Heavy exercise (1-2 hours before bed)

P - Plan for Sleep:

- Keep a routine and schedule
- Avoid daytime napping and dozing
- Train your brain - bed is for sleep and not for wakefulness and frustration



Dr. Hutchinson says to remember your bed is for sleep and/or sexual activity. If you're lying awake for more than 30 minutes, go to another room and engage in a boring activity. When you feel sleepy again, return to your bed. Repeat as needed.

As we all struggle to adjust to the time change, remember a positive sleep routine will help you get a restful night's sleep throughout the year.

For additional sleep improvement support contact Carilion Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine at **540-985-8505**.

