

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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**Does Sleep Hygiene Make Me Clean??**

Do you often find yourself taking naps throughout the day? Or have to drag yourself out of bed each morning? These could be signs that you either get too much sleep or too little sleep. Both could have a big impact on your life. Sleep is necessary for our survival, but bad sleeping habits are a common problem. These days, it seems like everyone is sleeping later and waking up even earlier. Are you playing video games into the wee hours of the night or waking up extra early to hit the gym? Stress and some medications also affect our sleep.

So what's the big deal about getting enough sleep? A lot! Did you realize sleep can play a part in weight gain, high blood pressure, and decreasing our body's ability to fight off infections? Research shows that by getting enough sleep, we learn better and can remember things more clearly. It also improves safety because we are more alert and aware throughout the day. Our mood improves when we get enough shut eye. Lastly, getting enough sleep can improve our heart health and lower our chances of getting a disease.

Sleep 'hygiene' refers to our nighttime schedule right before lying down. Practicing good habits can help you to get a full night of peaceful sleep. So what exactly should you be doing? The first thing is to not watch TV right before you sleep, especially not in bed! TV is too intense for our brain when it is trying to calm down for

the night. Another helpful practice is to not drink or smoke at least 4-6 hours before bed. Tobacco and alcohol both contain ingredients that actually keep you awake.

Next, you need to make a pre-sleep ritual and stick to it. This way, your body knows what time it is and what to expect to do next. For example, you can do a couple of minutes of light reading or maybe take a warm bath. If you feel hungry close to bedtime, you can eat a light snack or drink some warm milk.

It is also important to try not to take naps during the day if you have problems sleeping at night. If you absolutely have to take a nap, try not to make it more than 30 minutes. It is also important to not do aerobic exercises right before bed. Also, try not to eat a large meal, especially one that contains a lot of sugar or spice before bed. It can affect how long it takes you to fall asleep and whether you stay asleep throughout the night. Try the tasty recipe at the end of this article to leave you fully satisfied, yet ready for sleep in a couple of hours.

Getting your bedroom ready is an important part of your sleep routine. Try not to keep it too cold or too hot. A nice, cool temperature works best for sleep. You also want to make sure that your room is as dark as possible. And close the door so that you don't have to deal with any distracting noise. Lastly, remember to keep your bedroom for sleeping purposes only. If possible, don't work or do other free time activities in the bedroom. That way your brain only associates the bedroom with sleep.

If you are in bed but cannot fall asleep within 20 minutes, get up and do something else until you feel sleepy again. Lying down in bed will only stress you out if you don't fall asleep right away. Go to bed only when you're sleepy!

There you have it. Sleep hygiene may not make you cleaner, but it sure will help you get a restful night of sleep so that you don't have to yell at anyone for no reason or take unwanted naps throughout the day. It may just leave you waking up a little more refreshed!

Here's a recipe with enough flavor to keep your taste buds happy, but not so much that it will keep you awake at night. If you want a little more flavor, add a sprinkle of grated Parmesan cheese just before you serve it.

### Spinach and Bacon Pasta

1 (12 ounce) package penne pasta	6 slices turkey bacon, chopped
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided	2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes	1 bag ready to eat fresh spinach

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the penne pasta, and cook until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Place turkey bacon in the skillet, and cook until browned and crisp. Add garlic, and cook for about 1 minute. Stir in the tomatoes, and cook until heated through. Place the spinach into a colander, and drain the hot pasta over it so it is wilted. Transfer to a large serving bowl, and toss with the remaining extra virgin olive oil, and the bacon and tomato mixture. Serves 4 – 6.

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