



Ascension

## COVID-19 and Sleep

One of the best things you can do if you do get sick with COVID-19 or any virus is to get plenty of sleep. Your body needs sleep to fight the infection if you are ill, and help prevent the infection if you are not. Keeping your immune system as healthy as possible helps your body fight the infection. If you do not get enough sleep, it lowers your immune system. When you sleep, your immune system releases cytokines. Some cytokines play a role in how your immune system functions. The exact amount of sleep a person needs to boost their immune system may vary, but according to the Mayo Clinic, most adults need seven to eight hours of quality sleep each night, while teens and school-age children need about 10 hours. Since getting good sleep is so vital to speeding up recovery from COVID-19 or any infection, there are things you can do to promote quality sleep. Consider the following tips:

- Take a warm bath: A warm bath may ease muscle soreness. It is also a nice way to relax before trying to sleep.
- Go to sleep a little earlier: Now is not the time to skimp on sleep. Try to get another hour or two of sleep each night. Also, if you need a nap during the day, take one.
- Use a humidifier: Place a cool-mist humidifier in your room to add moisture to the air. The increased moisture may help decrease congestion and ease coughing.
- Elevate your head: If you have congestion, placing a few pillows under your head to prop yourself up may decrease stuffiness.
- Create the right environment: The right environment helps promote sleep regardless of whether you are sick or not. But since getting enough rest helps your immune system, it is even more important to get the sleep you need. Most people sleep best in a dark and quiet environment that is not too warm.
- Relax before going to sleep: With all the current uncertainty in the world, it can be hard to quiet your mind, but taking some time before you try to sleep to relax is helpful. Put aside your phone and log off social media. Instead, find something that helps you unwind, such as listening to music, reading or doing deep breathing exercises.

*Sources: Irwin, M. (2002). [Effects of sleep and sleep loss on immunity and cytokines](#). *Brain, behavior, and immunity*, 16(5), 503-512. [Lack of Sleep: Can It Make You Sick?](#) (2018). [Lack of Sleep FAQ](#) *The Flu; Caring for Someone that is Sick*. (2010). [Influenza Home Care Guide](#) [ASA Authors & Reviewers](#) Sleep Physician at [American Sleep Association Reviewers and Writers](#) Board-certified sleep M.D. physicians, scientists, editors and writers for ASA.*