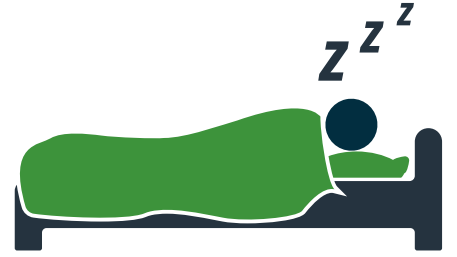


مستشفى الملك فيصل التخصصي ومركز الأبحاث  
King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre  
مؤسسة عامة Gen. Org.

## For Better Health Series (4) Healthy Sleep and COVID-19



**Hussein Raef, MD**  
**Consultant Endocrinologist**

An article published recently in Harvard Medical Newsletter titled “Strategies to promote better sleep in these uncertain times”. And I mentioned in my first article in this series the importance of healthy sleep in supporting the body's immunity in addition to its importance in the health of body and soul.

Of course, our nervous system relates to what is going on around it and seeks to protect us by increasing alertness, but this makes sleeping and relaxing more difficult. However, we can control and adjust our behaviors to mitigate this effect. I will summarize in this article the practical points that help in obtaining a comfortable and healthy sleep, despite the rapid events that happen around us and the feeling of risks at times.

### **Things we can do during the day:**

1. Maintain a waking routine on a daily life basis, and exercise at the same normal time to keep the body's biological clock.
2. Exposure to sunlight in the morning that helps control your biological clock.
3. Daily exercise relieves the effect of stress so keep it daily if possible.
4. Avoid Stimulants after a certain hour of the day, for example after 03:00 in the afternoon.
5. Occupy yourself with work if possible or with any useful thing that attracts your attention and consumes your energy such as helping others – within safe conditions at this time – has a wonderful effect on the health of oneself and its ability to feel safe and relax.

### **Things we can do during the night:**

1. It is very important that there is a time to stop receiving news and electronic messages and to use electronic gadgets sufficiently at least one hour before bedtime, as the brain needs a period of time to reduce its speed of alert and prepare to relax and sleep. There is hardly any benefit from the long-continued use of these tools, with their duplicate information.
2. Commitment to a specific sleep time as much as possible, as the body gets used to feeling sleep at this time while preparing the brain for sleep as previously stated.
3. Refraining from using smart phones in bed because the light caused by it prevents the sleep hormone “melatonin” from being excreted while reading a book may help on this.
4. Not sitting in bed for long periods of the day or at night when you are not willing to sleep.
5. Create an atmosphere of relaxation and meditation before bedtime.

In spite of the above, some of us may suffer from chronic sleep problems that require following-up with their doctors, but it may be worth noting that many of us may suffer from several nights of insomnia and this is normal and does not cause excessive anxiety because overcoming it is usually possible after adapting to the new situation.