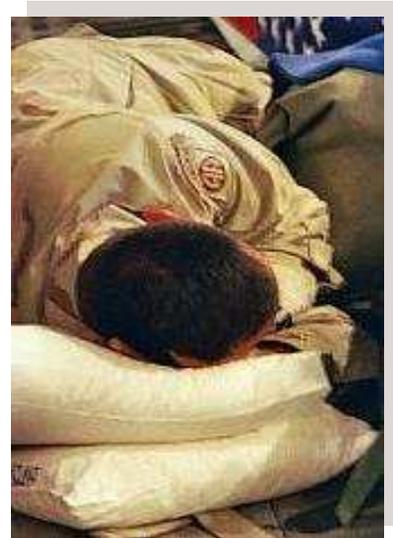




# JUST THE FACTS: Traumatic Brain Injury Sleep Problems

- **Talk to your doctor.** Discuss sleep issues with your doctor to determine potential causes and treatments. Bring a list of current medications to help determine whether any of the medications are contributing to the problem. Your provider may suggest a treatment approach including medications, counseling, or further testing.
- **Manage your daytime habits.** Develop a daily schedule. Make sure you have some activities in your schedule that are pleasant and meaningful. Limit passive activities like watching TV.
- **Maintain healthy habits.** Exercise daily, eat a healthy diet, and avoid alcohol, drugs, and smoking.
- **Practice healthy sleep habits.**
  - o Set a consistent schedule for bedtime and waking up.
  - o Follow a routine before you go to bed.
  - o Avoid caffeine and sugar, five hours before bedtime.
  - o Do not exercise within two hours of bedtime.
  - o Only use your bed for sleeping and sex.
  - o Create a restful atmosphere in your bedroom.
  - o Use window shades to darken the room.
  - o If you're struggling for more than thirty minutes to get to sleep, get up and do something else until you feel tired enough to sleep.
  - o Do not take naps during the day unless necessary to safely perform a task such as operating a car or heavy machinery.



**Avoid caffeine and sugar,  
five hours before bedtime.**



# JUST THE FACTS: Traumatic Brain Injury

## Sleep Problems

- **Do not take supplements without consulting your doctor.** Not all supplements are harmless (especially in combination with other medications).
- **Recognize your triggers.** Take note if certain people, places, situations, or activities are more likely to affect your sleep. Keeping a sleep journal that includes all of this information can be helpful.
- **Stop the worry spin cycle.** If you find yourself thinking things like “I’m never going to fall asleep” or “I’m going to be too tired to work tomorrow,” stop the thoughts as quickly as possible. Instead of worrying, substitute thoughts like “I may be tired tomorrow but I will still be able to get my work done.”
- **Practice relaxation exercises.** Learn how to do slow breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or use imagery to relax your body and mind. Practice these techniques daily and use them when you’re struggling to sleep.
- **Give yourself a break.** Resume your activities slowly following your injury. Be sure to schedule “down-time.”
- **Be practical.** Use alarm clocks to wake up, and ask for a doctor’s note to adjust work hours if necessary.
- **Work on related issues.** If your sleep problems are related to stress, physical pain, depression, or other issues, make sure you’re addressing those problems.

