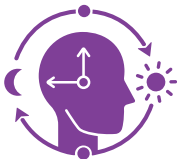
FACT SHEET #lightpollution

Light pollution harms our health and wellbeing.

Over the past 100 years, humans have transformed the night, erasing the natural darkness with which we evolved. While artificial light at night is crucial to our modern world, it comes at a cost. Increasing scientific research indicates that artificial light at night has detrimental effects on human health and well-being.



Circadian rhythm disruption

Largely influenced by the light and dark, our circadian rhythm is our body's natural 24-hour regulating clock. Circadian disruption occurs when our internal clock is out of sync with the day-night cycle. Circadian disruption has been linked to an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, mood disorders, reproductive problems, and cancers.

Decreased melatonin production

While we are still learning about the relationship between artificial light and human health, we know that exposure to light at night—even at dim levels—can suppress the body's production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates our sleep-wake cycle, metabolism, and immune system.

Glare impares vision

Irresponsible outdoor lighting at night decreases safety. Overly bright and poorly shielded lighting creates blinding glare, impairing vision leading to dangerous missteps and accidents. Blue light, often used in newer LED streetlights, is more likely to create dangerous glare.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Live a healthy life in a world filled with artificial light.

- **Use fully shielded outdoor light fixtures** to minimize the light that streams into your home.
- **Use indoor light bulbs that emit warm white light** with a color temp. of 3000K or lower.
- **When it's time for bed, keep your bedroom dark** by using blackout curtains and covering all light sources such as clock radios and charging stations.
- **If you need a nightlight, use one with dim red or amber light.** Red light is least likely to be disruptive.
- **Try not to use devices with screens 30-minutes prior to sleeping**. If you must use devices at night, install a color temperature app that reduces blue light levels.
- **Work with your neighbors and local government** to reduce light pollution in your community.

DarkSky

Learn more about light pollution and human health.

darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/human-health