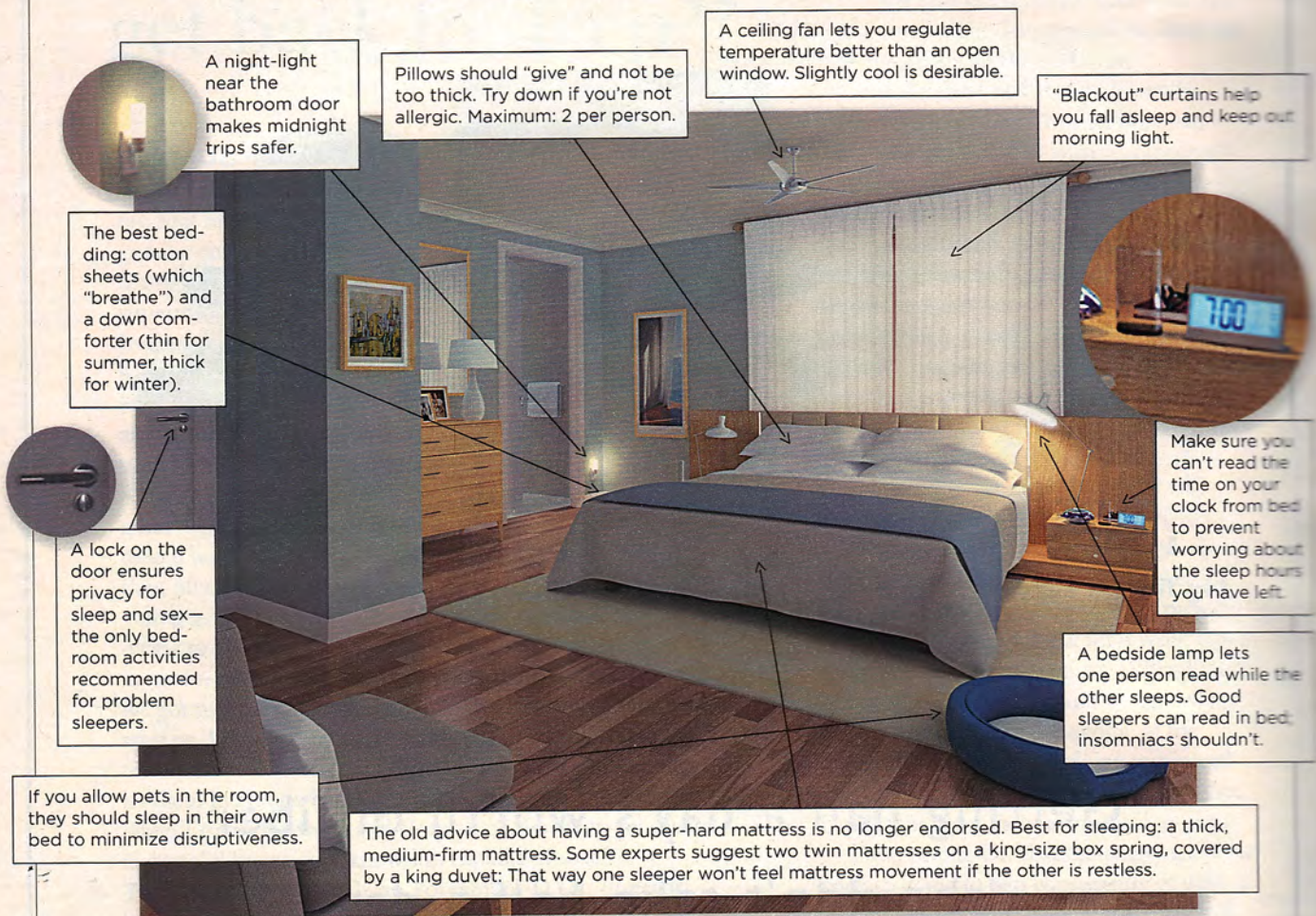


A DREAM BEDROOM

We asked America's top sleep experts to help us design the perfect sleeping environment. What they had to say will surely put you to sleep!



A night-light near the bathroom door makes midnight trips safer.

Pillows should "give" and not be too thick. Try down if you're not allergic. Maximum: 2 per person.

A ceiling fan lets you regulate temperature better than an open window. Slightly cool is desirable.

"Blackout" curtains help you fall asleep and keep out morning light.

The best bedding: cotton sheets (which "breathe") and a down comforter (thin for summer, thick for winter).

A lock on the door ensures privacy for sleep and sex—the only bedroom activities recommended for problem sleepers.

Make sure you can't read the time on your clock from bed to prevent worrying about the sleep hours you have left.

If you allow pets in the room, they should sleep in their own bed to minimize disruptiveness.

A bedside lamp lets one person read while the other sleeps. Good sleepers can read in bed; insomniacs shouldn't.

The old advice about having a super-hard mattress is no longer endorsed. Best for sleeping: a thick, medium-firm mattress. Some experts suggest two twin mattresses on a king-size box spring, covered by a king duvet: That way one sleeper won't feel mattress movement if the other is restless.

Do You NEED a SLEEP Specialist?

If you decide to consult a sleep expert, you have two options: Work with a physician, who will refer you to a lab for an overnight test if needed, or go to a sleep center. Centers test for all sleep disorders and have their own labs. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine lists 998 accredited facilities (see its list at www.sleepcenters.org).

Either way, you won't necessarily end up spending the night in a sleep lab having a polysomnogram test. More good news: Insurance companies generally pick up the

tab, which can range from \$800 to \$2,000 per night.

First, your doctor will use questionnaires, a physical and a detailed medical history to try to determine the cause of your troubles. There are 80 classifiable sleep disorders, from sleep apnea to circadian rhythm disorders, according to Nancy Foldvary-Shafer, D.O., director of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Sleep Medicine Program and author of *Getting a Good Night's Sleep*. Most people with insomnia can be

treated with behavioral therapy and/or medication. Only some cases require a polysomnogram to track brain waves and body movement (rapid eye movement sleep, heart rate, oxygen level, snoring, kicking and brief awakenings you may not notice). The newest labs look like hotel rooms, but you'll sleep with electrodes attached to your head, chest and legs. On the basis of the lab report, your physician will diagnose the case and prescribe treatment.

—Kristen Hampshire