

Are You Getting a Good Night's Sleep?

Sleep is an absolute necessity for good health. Sleep helps your body renew and repair itself. And good sleep will help improve your mood and attitude towards life. Unfortunately, many people do not get the quality sleep they need.

It has been estimated that about 30% of all adults suffer from some form of insomnia. They either have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. For about 10% of the population these problems are chronic and ongoing. It also seems that the older you are the more likely you are to have trouble sleeping. About 50% of seniors have sleeping problems.

But, even people who don't have insomnia may experience some form of sleep deprivation. The average adult needs a minimum of seven hours of sleep each night and could benefit from 8-9 hours. Younger people need even more sleep. Teenagers need about 8-10 hours and preteens need about 9-11 hours.

In a gallop poll done in 2013 only 36% of the population got 8 hours of sleep or more. 25% got seven hours, and the remaining 39%, got less than seven hours. A more recent study, done in 2019, found that only half of all children and teens were getting enough sleep. This is not good.

Getting Enough Sleep Is Essential to Health

Getting less sleep than you need each night is associated with an increased risk for many health problems. These include serious problems like diabetes, heart disease and depression. Lack of sleep is also a hidden cause of obesity. If you don't get enough sleep your body doesn't produce enough leptin, the hormone that satiates hunger.

Inadequate sleep also reduces immunity, so you're more likely to catch a cold or flu if you aren't getting enough sleep. This is because lack of sleep increases cortisol levels, which increases feelings of stress and suppresses immune functions.

Lack of sleep affects both concentration and judgment which can lead to an increased risk of accidents. Lack of sleep also affects your mood. It can make you more stressed and irritable, which can put strain on your relationships.

In contrast, getting enough sleep helps you resist and fight off infection, lose weight, have more energy, experience a better mood and reduce the risk of accidents. Children need adequate sleep to perform well in school and adults need sufficient sleep to perform well at work.

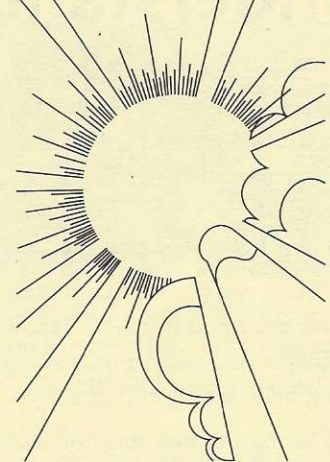
Getting the Sleep You Need

Given these facts, it's important to schedule time for adequate sleep. While it may seem like skipping sleep will help you get on top of the many things you need to do, it will actually be counterproductive when done continually. When you cheat yourself of sleep you become less efficient as you become increasingly fatigued and using coffee or energy drinks won't solve the problem.

So, start your path to better sleep by setting a regular bedtime and a regular time to wake up. Your body has circadian rhythms, which involve the natural fluctuations in various



SUNSHINE SHARING



Vol. 32 No. 1

Your guide to better health the natural way.

Important Notice

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chemicals in your body. These fluctuations produce cycles that make certain times of the day better for certain tasks, such as sleeping, eating and exercising. These cycles work in harmony with the rhythms of nature. When you set a consistent time to go to bed and wake it helps your body's circadian rhythms work more efficiently.

You've probably heard the old adage of Benjamin Franklin, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." If you understand sleep patterns (as described in the sidebar below) you'll discover there is truth to this. If you get to bed between 9:00 and 11:00 PM it allows you to enter the deep sleep cycles during the darkest time of the night, which optimizes the benefits you get from sleep.

Understanding Sleep

The brain emits electromagnetic waves and the ability to measure these waves has helped researchers understand sleep better. They recognize that sleep occurs in five stages. These stages repeat themselves in cycles of sleep that typically last around 90 minutes. The different cycles are characterized by different brainwave patterns.

When you're awake your brain mostly operate in beta waves, which are around 12-30 Hz. Your waking brain also emits gamma waves when processing information. These waves are faster, between 25 and 100 Hz.

During the first stage of sleep, your brain drops from beta waves to alpha waves, which are slower, vibrating at about 8-12 Hz. At this stage, which lasts about 5-10 minutes, you are still close to being awake, so much so that if something wakes you up you may not even realize you were asleep.

During the second stage your brain waves begin to slow down, operating at about 5-8 Hz. These are theta brain waves. This stage typically lasts about 20 minutes. In both stage one and stage two, you are in what is referred to as a light sleep.

During stages three and four you move into deep sleep. Here your brain moves into the very slow delta waves, operating at about 0.5 to 3 Hz, with occasional spikes of higher waves called spindle waves. It's harder to wake someone up during deep sleep and if you do wake them up, they may be disoriented and groggy.

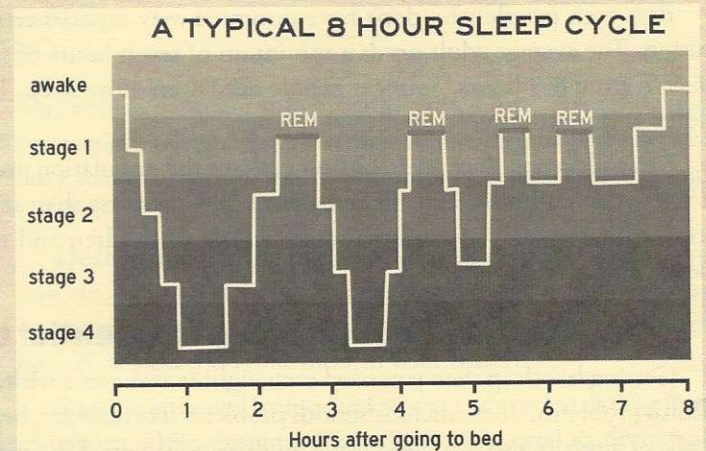
In deep sleep your body is focused on rebuilding and repairing itself. The pituitary releases growth hormone during stage three which circulates and helps cells proliferate. It also causes the liver to release a hormone called IGF-1. These two hormones act together to balance blood sugar and keep your body in good repair. Low levels of them cause muscles to lose their tone, bones to become brittle and skin and hair to get thinner. Wrinkles, gray hair, sagging skin and hair loss are all signs these hormones are declining.

Suggestions for Falling Asleep

If you have difficulty falling asleep there are some things you can do to make it easier to start sleeping at your scheduled bedtime. You'll need to experiment to see what works best for you.

Avoid Electronics: Your body regulates sleep through the conversion of the neurotransmitter serotonin into the hormone melatonin. During the day, the blue light of the sky inhibits this process. The darkness of night stimulates it.

Computers, tablets, TVs and cell phones all emit blue light, similar to the sky, which inhibits melatonin production. So stop using these devices about one hour prior to your established bedtime or at least enable night mode. If possible, try to keep your bedroom free of anything with a screen. If you want to do something before bed to help you relax, try reading a book or listen to relaxing music.



About 30 minutes of a 90-minute sleep cycle will be spent in deep sleep. Deep sleep mostly occurs in the first half of the night and is probably the most important part of sleep, even though it only takes up about 10-25% of the time you spend sleeping.

You enter deep sleep most naturally during the darkest part of the night and have a harder time entering it when you sleep during the day. This is why you'll get better sleep if you don't stay up too late. People tend to get less deep sleep as they get older and health issues like pain or sleep apnea can inhibit deep sleep.

At the end of a sleep cycle you enter REM sleep, which is named for the rapid eye movements that take place at this time. The eyes move about in different directions under the eyelids and your heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate all increase. Your brain is more active and you are closer to consciousness.

REM sleep is also known as dream sleep because it's during this time that you dream. Dream sleep also seems to be important for health. It appears to be a time when the brain processes thoughts and memories and tries to sort and make sense of things.

The average person has about five to six cycles of REM sleep each night. Being deprived of REM sleep adversely affects people's mood and self-image, making these stages of sleep important to mental and emotional health.



Sleep in the Dark: Artificial lighting is part of the reason why people not only have trouble falling asleep but have trouble staying asleep. Any artificial light from windows, chargers or clocks will disturb melatonin production.

So, eliminate all light sources in the room where you sleep. Use heavy drapes to block light from windows and turn off all electrical equipment that emits light of any kind. You'll sleep better if the room is pitch black. If you can't block out all the light in your bedroom, get a sleep mask to block out excess light.

Increase Melatonin Levels: To increase levels of serotonin you can take 5-HTP about one hour prior to bedtime. 5-HTP is converted to serotonin in your brain. When you darken your room your body will then convert the serotonin to melatonin.

If your body's cycle of sleeping and waking is disturbed you can also take melatonin to help reset it. Take it about 30 minutes before your scheduled bedtime. Melatonin is also helpful when your sleep schedule is altered due to travel (jet lag) or working night shifts.

Calm Your Mind: Avoid disturbing and stressful influences prior to bedtime. Don't watch violent TV shows or movies or play violent or fast paced games. It's also helpful to avoid the news. The same holds true for loud, jarring music. Get your mind on positive things prior to bedtime. Try reading books with positive, uplifting messages or praying and meditating at bedtime. If things are bothering you, try writing them down in a journal so you can process them and get them off your mind before retiring.

If you have trouble calming your mind there are a number of herbs and supplements that may help. These include hops, scullcap, passionflower, l-threonine and GABA. Valerian may also help, but some people find it stimulating rather than relaxing. Passionflower is particularly helpful when you can't sleep because of excessive mental chatter. Try taking a **Sleep Formula** that contains some of these ingredients about 30 minutes before bed.

Relax Your Muscles: If you're tense and stressed from the day, it really helps to relax your muscles as well as your mind. The previously mentioned hops, scullcap and passionflower may be helpful along with chamomile and kava kava. Kava kava is great for relaxing your muscles but it doesn't quiet your mind when used by itself.

Take Magnesium: If you find small noises distract you, your muscles are tense and/or it's difficult to sleep deeply, you may be deficient in magnesium. Try taking 200-400 mg. of magnesium prior to bed. It's better to take this in liquid form or to open the capsules and put the powder under your tongue before swallowing it. It may also be helpful to take about 500 mg. of vitamin C at the same time.

Taking magnesium regularly for about 7-10 days can result not only in more relaxed muscles and an easier time falling asleep, it can also help you sleep more soundly and be less prone to waking up in the middle of the night. It will also help you have more energy during the day. Magnesium may even help children who have problems with bed-wetting or nightmares.

Avoid Stimulants Before Bed: Caffeinated beverages (e.g. coffee, tea, colas) may disturb sleep. So try limiting them to the morning and at lunch time and avoiding them in the late afternoon and evening. It's also a good idea to avoid spicy foods like capsicum, garlic and horseradish in the evening.

While exercise is important, it is better to exercise in the morning or early afternoon and avoid strenuous exercise in the evening, especially right before bedtime. Exercise in the evening tends to be stimulating and can make it more difficult to get to sleep.

Suggestions for Better Sleep

It's not just the amount of sleep that's important, it's also the quality of sleep. The two most important stages of sleep, as discussed on page two, are deep sleep and REM sleep. You need to get adequate amounts of both



types to feel rested and refreshed in the morning. If you can't sleep soundly and don't wake up feel refreshed and invigorated, or you wake up too soon and can't get back to sleep, here are some suggestions that may help.

Balance Blood Sugar: If you've ever awakened suddenly in the middle of the night feeling stressed and then found it impossible to relax and get back to sleep, you may have a blood sugar problem. If you have hyperinsulinemia, also known as metabolic syndrome, your blood sugar may be dropping too low in the middle of the night.

Normally when blood sugar level drops too low, the hormone glucagon activates to increase blood sugar levels. High levels of insulin inhibit glucagon so your adrenal glands release cortisol and epinephrine to raise your blood sugar level. This causes you to wake up suddenly as if something scared you.

If this happens to you, try working to lower your blood sugar. Avoid refined carbohydrates and eat more protein and vegetables. Also, don't eat sugary foods in the evening, especially within

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Additional Help and Information

For more information about how to solve sleep problems so you can get the sleep you need contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

The Circadian Code by Satchin Panda, Ph.D.

The Insomnia Answer by Paul Glovinsky, Ph.D. and Arhtur Spielman, Ph.D.

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a couple of hours of bedtime. Instead, right before bed eat a small protein-rich snack. For example, a few table-spoonfuls of almond butter or whole milk cottage cheese. You could also take a couple of teaspoons of coconut oil. This will help to stabilize your blood sugar during the night.

Reduce Your Stress Levels: Stress can temporarily interfere with sleep, but long term stress can leave you feeling exhausted and depleted, something people commonly call burnout. If you're burned out, your body enters a state of high alert where it becomes very difficult to relax. You may drop to sleep exhausted, but be unable to sleep soundly, frequently tossing and turning and waking up for short periods. You can also have disturbing dreams or nightmares. The lack of ability to enter deep sleep leaves you feeling tired in the morning even if you've been in bed for 8-9 hours.

Adaptations, especially the more nourishing ones, can be helpful in restoring your ability to sleep peacefully. Ashwagandha, holy basil, schizandra and reishi are some good choices. Look for an **Adaptogen Formula** containing these and other adaptogens and take it during the day.

A **Chinese Fire Increasing Formula** may also be helpful. It will contain herbs like schizandra, arborvitae seed, broomrape, and dodder seed. This formula can help you have more energy during the day and sleep better at night. In severe cases, an **Adrenal Glandular Formula** may be helpful.

Reduce Chronic Inflammation and Pain: Chronic pain of any kind can interfere with sleep. Chronic inflammation can also affect the brain, altering mood and sleep. Remedies

that reduce pain and inflammation, therefore, can result in a better night's sleep. Possible remedies include omega-3 essential fatty acids, curcumin or turmeric, hops, valerian, corydalis and CBD.

Deal with Snoring: Snoring not only disturbs the sleep of anyone sleeping with you, it also disrupts the quality of your own sleep. It's also a possible indicator for sleep apnea (see below), which is very harmful to your health.

Snoring is caused by blocked airways which restrict the flow of oxygen while sleeping. If you snore you need to decongest your body. Start with a good **Colon Cleansing Program** and an improved diet. Then use an **Herbal Decongestant** or **Anti-Snoring Formula** to help clear your sinuses and lymphatics. You'll not only help yourself sleep more soundly, you'll also help your spouse or partner.

Whatever you do, remember it's important that you resolve any sleep issues you have so you can get the rest you need. You'll not only be healthier, you'll feel better and work more efficiently.

Sleep Apnea

If you snore loudly, gasp for air during sleep, awaken with a dry mouth, find it difficult to stay asleep and don't wake up feeling refreshed after an adequate night's sleep you should consider getting checked for sleep apnea. The main type of sleep apnea occurs when the muscles in the back of your throat relax, narrowing or collapsing the airways. Since you aren't getting enough oxygen, your brain rouses you from sleep enough to move and reopen your airway. This brief period of waking up is so short you don't remember it happening, but it prevents you from reaching the deeper stages of sleep.

This pattern can repeat itself many times a night, which means you never get enough deep sleep for your body to heal and maintain itself. Sleep apnea not only makes you tired and irritable during the day, it also contributes to heart disease, high blood pressure and blood sugar problems.

You should get medical assistance if you have sleep apnea, but there are several things you can do to improve the situation. If you're overweight, it is important to lose weight. If you have respiratory congestion, work on clearing that up as discussed under snoring. Don't smoke and exercise to improve your muscle tone.