

Good Sleep is Vital for Good Health



Dim the lights, lower the shades, breathe deeply and slide under the covers. It's bedtime. But as your body begins to relax, your mind starts to race. Did you get everything done today? What's in store for tomorrow?

Trouble falling asleep or trouble staying asleep, known as insomnia, is a growing problem in the United States. Studies show that many Americans don't get enough sleep because of stress, anxiety and bad sleep habits.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH? Medical experts suggest anywhere from 6-8 hours for adults and up to 10 hours for children and adolescents is the correct amount of sleep. But according to the National Sleep Foundation, one in three adults gets six hours of sleep or less. How do you know if you're getting enough sleep? Listen to your body. Falling asleep at school, concerts or the movies isn't necessarily a sign that the event is boring. It could be a sign that you're not getting enough sleep.

DON'T SKIP SLEEP. With increasing activities, many people stay awake into the early hours of the morning. Sleep may seem like the easy thing to give up, but most people don't realize the negative effects that cutting down on sleep can have. In addition to feeling sleepy during the day, lack of sleep can cause memory and concentration problems, slower reflexes and difficulty getting along with others. In some cases, lack of sleep can be deadly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that drowsy drivers cause thousands of car crashes each year.

If you need help getting to sleep, check out these tips:

TIPS FOR GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

- Avoid caffeine for six hours and alcohol and nicotine for two to three hours before bedtime.
- Don't exercise too close to bedtime. It is best if you finish exercising at least four hours before sleep.
- Clear your mind of the day's stress. Take a few minutes to talk about the day. Or try making lists to help clear your mind of the day's stress.
- Control your exposure to light. Darkness is a cue for your body to sleep.
- Turn alarm clocks toward the wall. Waking up in the middle of the night and checking the time may increase anxiety and prevent you from getting back to sleep.
- Wake up at the same time every day. Your body will respond well to a consistent cycle.

Sleep is essential for your health. Understand the value of a good night's rest and take action if you are having trouble. Looking for more? Your Employee Assistance Program has more resources and tools to get you "resting easy." Call us or visit EAP4YOU.com today.

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