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# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

JUNE 2011

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: SLEEP

**S**leep is something that you should be “doing” everyday! You may often think of sleep as a time for rest and renewal. However, sleep is more than just a rest time. It is important to keep you healthy. Research shows that sleep is important for memory, weight control, safety, mood, heart health, and disease prevention.

**Learning and memory:** Sleep helps the brain save new information to memory.

**Weight control:** Chronic sleep deprivation may cause weight gain by upsetting the way our bodies process and store carbohydrates.

**Safety:** Not getting enough sleep can lead to a greater tendency to fall asleep during the daytime. This sleepiness may cause falls and mistakes at home, at work, or on the road.

**Mood:** Sleep loss may result in bad temper, impatience, failure to concentrate, and moodiness.

**Heart health:** Serious sleep disorders have been connected to hypertension and irregular heartbeats.

**Disease:** Sleep deprivation hurts immune function. Getting enough sleep on a regular basis may also help fight cancer.



**Sleep on a  
comfortable  
mattress  
and pillows.**

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## *Finish eating at least 2-3 hours before you plan to go to sleep.*

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#### How much sleep do you need?

How much sleep do you get in one night? Although each person needs a different amount of sleep, there is no doubt how important it is for everyone. The National Sleep Foundation has guidelines for sleep time based on age.

INFANTS	
(0–2 months)	10.5–18 hours*
(2–12 months)	14–15 hours*
TODDLERS/CHILDREN	
(12–18 months)	13–15 hours*
(18 months–3 years)	12–14 hours*
(3–5 years)	11–13 hours*
(5–12 years)	9–11 hours
ADOLESCENTS	
	8.5–9.5 hours
ADULTS	
	7–9 hours

\*Includes naps

#### Not getting enough sleep can cause serious problems. It is associated with:

- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- Increase in body mass index — a greater likelihood of obesity
- Increased risk of diabetes and heart problems
- Increased risk for depression and substance abuse
- Decreased ability to pay attention, react to signals, or remember new information

#### For better sleep, experts recommend that you and your family members follow these sleep tips:

- **Establish consistent sleep and wake schedules**, even on weekends.
- **Create a regular, relaxing bedtime routine** such as soaking in a hot bath or listening



to soothing music. Begin an hour or more before the time you expect to fall asleep.

- **Create a comfortable sleep environment.** Keep the room dark, quiet, comfortable, and cool.
- **Be comfortable!** Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- **Finish eating before bedtime**, at least 2-3 hours before you plan to go to sleep.
- **Exercise regularly** during the day or at least a few hours before bedtime.
- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol products** close to bedtime and give up smoking.

#### REFERENCES:

- Harvard Medical School. "Importance of Sleep: Six reasons not to scrimp on sleep" Harvard Health Publications. [www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)
- National Sleep Foundation. [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov/sleep](http://www.cdc.gov/sleep)

#### ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN JUNE 2011

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