

Sleep: It's more than just a beauty rest!

September 2014 Newsletter



Do you consider it a luxury to get a full night's rest? If so, you may need to "sleep on that!" The fact is we all need enough sleep to be at our best physically, emotionally and mentally.

Have you read the other articles in this month's bulletin? They're about boosting your learning agility and becoming a more positive thinker. And guess what? To do either, you need healthy sleep habits!

Do you get enough sleep?

Nearly 30% of Americans don't get the sleep they need.¹ As a result they often spend their daytime hours irritable, stressed, disorganized and even accident prone.

What does sleep do for you?

Some of the benefits of getting the sleep you need include:²

- **Better ability to fight illness.** Sleep helps you stay healthy. During sleep, your immune system rebuilds to help you ward off illness.
- **Better stress management.** As you wind down for bed, your body releases calming hormones. These help counteract and reduce the stress hormones in your system. Sleep gives your body a timeout from tension.
- **Better memory.** While you're asleep, your body is resting. But your brain is always at work. It's busy sorting out new experiences and information. It creates links that build your memory even while you're snoozing. So getting enough sleep actually helps your memory.
- **Better safety record.** When you don't get enough sleep, you're less organized and focused. This can have serious

results. For instance, car accidents, falls and mistakes happen more often when people are tired. Sleepy drivers can be as dangerous as drunk drivers!³

- **Better emotional balance.** Have you ever noticed you're more cranky or easily upset when you're tired? That's because sleeping gives your brain the chance to regulate chemicals and hormones that impact your mental and emotional wellbeing. Without enough sleep, it can be harder to cope with everyday stress.
- **Better weight control.** Getting enough sleep may help keep your weight steady. Lack of sleep can throw off the balance of hormones that tell you when you're hungry. Sometimes people who are too tired eat more because they receive "hunger signals" as a result of this imbalance. Some experts also believe that lack of sleep may change the way your body digests carbohydrates, leading to possible weight gain.

Is there a "magic number" of hours you need to sleep?

Many sources say you need 7-9 hours of sleep per night. But there's no real magic number because we're all different. What works for me may not work for you. And what worked for you 10 years ago may be different now too.

An easy way to find your best sleep amount is just by trial and error. See how you feel and function on more and less sleep. Then work into a routine of sleeping for wellness!

¹www.health.usnews.com

²www.about.com

³www.drowsydriving.org