

Healthy Living Newsletter

Helping you stay informed . . .

The Good Sleep Issue

Sweet Dreams

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. . . while improving your health!

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Nutrition Corner



Take Control of Your Health

SLEEP YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH!

When we think about getting in shape and improving our health, we often overlook one of the most important activities - SLEEP!

Did you know that sleep is just as important as diet and exercise when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle?

Sleep keeps your body and brain functioning at peak capacity and can:

1. **Help You Lose Weight.** Sleep deprivation promotes the release of the stress hormone cortisol, which tells your body to store more fat. Getting the right amount of sleep is important for weight loss and weight management.
2. **Regulate Mood & Improve Social Interaction.** Changes in your mood is one of the most apparent side-effects of insufficient sleep and can cause irritability, increased frustration, and even symptoms of depression.
3. **Enhance Memory & Brain Performance.** Sleep is absolutely essential for your brain to function at an optimal level, affecting everything from your ability to concentrate and solve problems, to recalling important information and details.
4. **Reduce The Risk Of Type II Diabetes.** Chronically under-sleeping raises the risk of developing Type II diabetes by affecting how your body processes sugar.
5. **Reduce Inflammation.** Insufficient sleep increases the amount of inflammation you experience, significantly raising your risk for developing heart disease, stroke and inflammatory conditions such as arthritis.
6. **Improve Athletic Performance.** Sports studies show that receiving adequate amounts of sleep improved athletes' speed, accuracy, reaction time and general feelings of well-being. In addition, lack of sleep reduces your body's ability to use glucose as energy to fuel your workouts.
7. **Clear Waste From The Brain.** Only while we sleep our brains are flushed with fluid in order to remove waste products that build up throughout the day. Many sleep experts believe this cleaning function is the primary purpose of sleep.
8. **Boost Your Immune System.** Sleep is essential for our immune system to be able to fight off infections. Even partial sleep loss can greatly reduce your natural immune response by lowering levels of infection-fighting cells in your blood.
9. **Help Maintain A Healthy Heart.** Both under-sleeping and over-sleeping have been shown to negatively impact heart health. Chronic under-sleepers are 48% more likely to develop or die from coronary heart disease, while chronic over-sleepers increase this same risk by 38%.
10. **Make You Live Longer.** The items we've covered above contribute to increasing lifespan, but even independent of these factors, getting the right amount of sleep has been shown to improve longevity.

If you have questions about your quality of sleep, consult your physician or contact your MedWatch Total Lifestyle Coach.

Best Foods THAT NATURALLY HELP YOU SLEEP

Eating and drinking for better sleep means more than just avoiding caffeine and heavy, heartburn-inducing foods at night. Certain foods and beverages may help you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly.

Put these items on your grocery list for more restful nights.

COMPLEX CARBS: The ideal bedtime snack combines complex carbs like cereal, toast or whole grain crackers, with proteins like milk, peanut butter or cheese. Complex carbs increase serotonin levels which contribute to good sleep.

NUTS TO YOU! Nuts are a good source of heart-healthy fats. Many have melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate your sleep cycle. Try a handful of almonds or walnuts at bedtime.

COTTAGE CHEESE: Foods that are high in leam protein, like cottage cheese, also pack the amino acid tryptophan. Sweeten it up and top with raspberries, which are rich sources of melatonin, for a restful night.

BEDTIME TEA: A nightly cup of caffeine-free tea can be a perfect relaxing ritual. Chamomile, Ginger, and Peppermint are calming choices for bedtime.

WARM MILK: Although some experts think of it as an old wives' tale, others say that milk helps you sleep because it contains tryptophan.

FRUIT: Certain fruits that contain melatonin may help you fall asleep faster and wake up less often during the night. Tart cherry juice, whole tart cherries, bananas, pineapple, and oranges all contain melatonin.

POULTRY: It's not just turkey that contains sleep-inducing tryptophan, all poultry does. Nibble on a piece of chicken or put sliced turkey onto a piece of whole wheat bread, both are great foods to help you sleep!

For more information on sleep and related topics, please visit:

» <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>



» <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/good-nights-sleep>



GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP



Fun Facts About Sleep - Did You Know . . .

- * Research shows you'll sleep better during a new moon and worse during a full moon.
- * The perfect nap, according to NASA, lasts for 26 minutes.
- * People who sleep less than 7 hours each night are 12% more likely to die prematurely.
- * We are the only mammals that willingly delay sleep.
- * You can survive for 60 days without eating, but only live 11 days without sleep.
- * If it takes you less than 5 minutes to fall asleep at night, you're probably sleep-deprived.
- * Ideally, falling asleep should take 10 to 15 minutes.
- * Sea otters hold hands when they sleep so they don't drift away from one another.
- * Today, 75% of us dream in color. Before color television, just 15% of us did.
- * One of our biggest sleep distractions is 24-hour Internet access.
- * Parents of a newborn lose 6 months of sleep in the first 2 years of their child's life.
- * Having a newborn baby impacts men's sleep more than women's.
- * Creative people sleep more but not as well.
- * Those who fly regularly for work could be more at risk of sleep deprivation.
- * Research shows a lack of sleep can cause weight gain.



Visit the MedWatch website for past issues of Healthy Living!

<https://www.urmedwatch.com/home/Content/news-health-links.aspx>



Techniques For Better Sleep!

Many of us experience trouble sleeping at one time or another. Usually it's due to stress, travel, illness, or other temporary interruptions to your normal routine. But if sleep problems are a regular occurrence and they interfere with your daily life, you may be suffering from a sleep disorder.

Sleep disorders impact your ability to get enough quality sleep and can take a serious toll on your mental and physical health. While it is normal to occasionally experience difficulties sleeping, it's not normal to regularly have problems getting to sleep at night. The most common sleep disorders include insomnia, sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, narcolepsy, shift work sleep disorder, jet lag, sleep walking, sleep terrors, REM sleep behavior disorder, and other disruptions in a person's circadian rhythm, the name given to the "internal body clock" that regulates your 24-hour cycle of biological processes.

While some sleep disorders may require a visit to the doctor, you can improve many sleeping problems on your own using a variety of techniques:

- » **Improve your daytime habits.** Regardless of your sleep problems, sticking to a consistent sleep schedule, getting regular exercise, limiting your intake of caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine, and managing stress will translate into better sleep over the long term.
- » **Develop a relaxing bedtime routine.** Avoid heavy meals and too many fluids late at night. Take a warm bath, read, or listen to soothing music to unwind, and turn off screens at least one hour before bedtime.
- » **Make your sleeping environment comfortable.** Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and cool. Your mattress, pillows and bedding should be clean and comfortable.
- » **Get back to sleep when you wake up at night.** Whether you have a sleep disorder or not, it's normal to wake briefly during the night. If you're continually having trouble getting back to sleep, try focusing on your breathing, meditating, or practicing another relaxation technique.
- » **Don't take your worries to bed.** Make a point of reviewing the day and make plans for the next day before you go to bed. Make a note of anything that's worrying you and resolve to postpone worrying about it until the next day when it will be easier to resolve.
- » **Limit naps.** A short nap in the mid-afternoon can boost memory, improve job performance, lift your mood, make you more alert, and ease stress. However, if you must nap, it's better to keep it short and before 5 p.m.
- » **Limit activities in bed.** The bed is for sleeping and having sex and that's it. If you suffer from insomnia, do not balance the checkbook, study, or make phone calls, for example, while in bed or even in the bedroom.
- » **Reduce stress.** There are a number of relaxation therapies and stress reduction methods you may want to try to relax the mind and the body before going to bed. Examples include progressive muscle relaxation (perhaps with audio tapes), deep breathing techniques, imagery, meditation, and biofeedback.

If you practice these techniques and still have trouble getting a good night's sleep, you should contact your physician or your MedWatch Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC).

Your MedWatch Total Lifestyle Coach (TLC) is your personal 'health advocate'.

Call (800) 386-5475 for more information about this newsletter topic and for additional tools and resources to help you improve and maintain your health.