



GET YOUR SLEEP

Sleep should be thought of as just as important as nutrition and physical activity when considering your well-being. Research has found that insufficient sleep is linked to the development of a number of chronic diseases and conditions along with impacting your waistline, immunity and safety.

The CDC reports that poor quality of sleep can have the following impact:

Diabetes – sleep duration has become a predictor of levels of hemoglobin A1C (an important marker of blood sugar).

Cardiovascular Disease – sleep apnea is an important forecaster of cardiovascular disease.

Obesity – Obstructive sleep apnea is a sleep disorder in which the airway partially or fully collapses, causing breathing issues and loud snoring while sleeping from excess weight. This condition is 7 times more common in people who are obese.

Depression – recent research has indicated that depressive symptoms may decrease once sleep apnea has been effectively treated and sufficient sleep restored.

Injury – just one sleepless night can impair performance, judgement and concentration.

The immune system may be influenced by sleep patterns as well. When it comes to bolstering our immune system, the best dosage for a sleep prescription may be a full 8 hours of sleep each night. A research study out of the United States suggests length of time and sleep efficiency are critical to health and immunity. Among the study's participants, those who got fewer than 7 hours of sleep were less able to ward off the symptoms of the common cold than those who got 8 hours or more of sleep. Based on results from the study, if you are regularly sleeping less than 7 hours nightly, you may be 2.94 times more likely to develop a cold¹

There are many reasons why we don't get enough sleep; chronic sleep deprivation can be seen as



an unspecific state of chronic stress, which impacts general health. In the end, compromised immune system function may be among the adverse effects of chronic sleep deprivation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROMOTE SLEEP?

At work:

Take regular breaks. OSHA requires regular breaks. When workers are tired, they're more prone to incidents because awareness of their surroundings is hampered by exhaustion. Taking breaks on a regular schedule helps keep employees fresh and alert.

Hydration. A lack of fluids can make you sluggish, irritable, and off your game. Hydration plays a critical role sleep quality. Be sure to stay hydrated throughout the work day.

Temperature. 68 degrees Fahrenheit promotes wakefulness, drowsiness increases with increased temperatures.

Lighting. Increasing brightness during night shifts can increase alertness and reduce tiredness. Aim for brightness between 750-1000 lux during low light work shifts.

Noise. Continuous sound can act as a stimulant for employees and is most effective with varied music.

At home:

Regular routine. Try to go to bed and wake at a similar time daily; this can help reinforce your body's sleep-wake rhythm.

Create a cozy nest. Make sure your bed mattress and pillows feel comfortable. Set your room dark, and comfortable but cool temperature. Be sure your sleeping space is quiet; use white noise to filter out distracting sounds. Use your bed for sleeping, and unwind in other areas of the home. Be sure your bedroom is quiet, dark and cool. Research is still

undecided on the perfect sleeping temperature, because this varies person to person, however most scientists agree that a slightly cool room promotes a comfortable sleeping environment.

Notice your nutrition and eat real food. Nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol may interrupt a good night's sleep. If you find yourself waking up in the middle of the night for a bathroom break, skip the water cooler a few hours before bedtime. Avoid heavy or large meals within a couple of hours of bedtime. The discomfort feeling from overeating might disrupt sleep. Eat a well-balanced diet consisting of whole foods, plants, veggies and fruits. There may be a link between micronutrient intake and sleep patterns, especially for those who are struggling with sleep disorders. More research is needed to understand these links. Studies suggest a diet consisting of adequate amounts of vitamin B1, vitamin D, vitamin C, zinc and calcium may enhance sleep.

Seek a sleep app. There are tools and resources that can help you facilitate sound sleeping. Apps can guide you through meditation, mental and emotional exercises, or provide soothing sounds to ease you to sleep.

Seek support. Know when to contact your healthcare provider. If you are struggling with more than an occasional restless evening, contact your provider. Identifying and treating any underlying causes can help you get the better sleep you deserve. Signs of poor sleep quality include never feeling rested (even after a full night of sleep), repeatedly waking up during the night, snoring, or waking up gasping for air. There are interventions that can help. Seek professional help if you are struggling with your sleep.

¹ Sheldon Cohen, William J. Doyle, and Cuneyt M. Alper, "Sleep Habits and Susceptibility to the Common Cold," JAMA Network, January 12, 2009, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/414701>

