Recommendations

Adults, ages 18-60, are recommended to get between 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Insufficient sleep is associated with a number of chronic diseases and conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression. Getting adequate sleep each night is crucial in maintaining one’s overall health and wellness.

Personal Habits

* Fix a bedtime and an awakening time. Try to be consistent with the bed time and awakening time. The body "gets used" to falling asleep at a certain time.

* Avoid napping during the day. If you do nap, limit naps to no longer than 30-45 minute before 3pm.

* Avoid caffeine 4-6 hours before bedtime. This includes caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea and many sodas, as well as chocolate.

* Avoid heavy, spicy, or sugary foods 4-6 hours before bedtime. These can affect your ability to stay asleep.

* Exercise regularly, but not right before bed. Regular exercise, particularly in the morning or afternoon, can help deepen sleep; however, do not exercise less than 3 hours before you plan to go to bed. Your body is more active after exercise and it can make sleep more difficult.

Environment

* Use comfortable bedding. This is often a source of sleep deprivation. Make sure you are comfortable. Sleeping on your side with a pillow between your legs has been show to relieve back pressure and help to create/ maintain a comfortable sleep position.

* Make sure the temperature is moderate and the room is well ventilated. Having good ventilation can help relax your body to promote calm breathing. Also, a comfortable temperature can prevent the body from becoming too hot or too cold during the night.

* Reserve space for sleep. You shouldn’t use the bed for an office, for reading, or for watching TV.

* Block out excess noise. Use white noise generators like a fan or soft radio music to block out ambient noise.

Getting ready for Bed

* Establish a pre-bed routine. These could include reading, washing your face, and writing downs things you are grateful for.

* Don’t take your worries to bed. Write down concerns or stressors and remove them from your mind for a period of time.

* Try a light snack before bed. Some good choices would be a warm beverage and/or a light snack such as a banana or a piece of toast.

* Practice relaxation methods. Try mediation, deep breathing techniques, or stretching routines prior to sleeping.

*Remember when first beginning a new sleep routine that it will take 2 to 3 weeks before your body will naturally respond to these new changes.

Reviewed and approved by Doctor Bradbury, September 2012