

Health tip: Sleep for health

Think you do just fine getting 5 or 6 hours of sleep? Like the nearly **35%** of adults getting less than the recommended 7+ hours, you are short-changing yourself. Sleep affects every aspect of your waking life—it is essential to your overall well-being.

Poor quality and insufficient sleep has short-term and long-term consequences. In the short-term, poor sleep may result in loss of attention span, poor decision-making, fatigue and irritability, while long-term implications, which are more compelling, include an increased risk for obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, and depression.¹

Getting adequate sleep helps:



Maintain brain function



Improve daytime performance and safety



Reduce your risk for disease



Improve your emotional health

7-9 hours

While the amount of sleep you need will change over the course of your life, and sleep needs vary from person to person, it is recommended that adults get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

A list of “to-do’s” that may help you snooze

Power down to recharge	Blue light from screens can disrupt your circadian rhythm and affect your ability to sleep. Turn off your mobile devices at least 30 minutes before you head to bed.
Keep a regular pattern of bedtime and waking	Try going to bed and waking up around the same time every day (yes, even on the weekends).
Make your bedroom all about sleep	A comfortable mattress, pillow and bedding will help you get a good night’s sleep. Keep your room dark, cool and quiet (you may consider using “white noise” to mask startling sounds).
Say “no” to that late-day “cup of joe”	Because it is a stimulant, caffeine may disrupt sleep. Avoid caffeine after lunch. Also, avoid alcohol before bed. Even though alcohol might make you feel sleepy, it can disrupt sleep later in the night.
Still awake?	If you don’t fall asleep within 20 minutes or so, get up and go into another room and do something relaxing, such as reading or listening to soft music until you feel tired.



A health care provider may help diagnose a sleep disorder by asking questions about sleep schedules and habits. It’s important to let your provider know if you think you might have a sleep problem such as feeling sleepy during the day, not waking up feeling refreshed or you are having trouble adapting to shift work.

¹ Source: Adapted from the National Institute of Health. Sleep Deprivation and Deficiency. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/why>. Accessed June 2021.

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