

FACTSHEET

Getting Enough Sleep Improves Safety, Health and Well-being

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fatigue, daytime sleepiness, lack of concentration or irritability, you may need to change your bedtime routine or consult your physician.

In general, seven to nine hours of quality, uninterrupted sleep per 24-hour period is recommended for adults.



Health and Safety Threats

In the workplace, sleep-deprived employees are prone to accidents and injuries, errors and diminished productivity. In addition, adults who don't get enough sleep are more susceptible to acute illness and chronic disease. For example, untreated sleep disorders and short sleep cycles are associated with increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes.

Adequate sleep is particularly essential for people with conditions such as arthritis, kidney disease, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease and depression. Among older adults, sleep disruption contributes to functional limitations and loss of independence.

"It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it."

—John Steinbeck

Sleep and a Healthy Attitude

When you are asleep, your brain is at work generating sleep stages to repair and restore your body while it is at rest.

The 2015 Sleep in America Poll sponsored by the [National Sleep Foundation](#) shows sleep and a sense of vitality are closely related:

- Respondents who ranked their health and quality of life as "very good" or "excellent" reported sleeping 18 to 23 minutes longer, on average in the past week, than those who rated their health and quality of life as "good," "fair" or "poor."
- Those who were "very" or "extremely" motivated to get enough sleep reported sleeping 36 more minutes per night across a week compared with others (7.3 vs. 6.7 hours).
- Among survey respondents with pain, a higher motivation to get enough sleep was associated with longer sleep durations and better sleep quality.

What's Disrupting Sleep?

A significant percentage of U.S. adults report insufficient sleep or rest at least 15 out of every 30 days.

Juggling work and family responsibilities (i.e., time management challenges), stress and anxiety, and pain are often cited as reasons for not getting enough sleep. Alcohol, caffeine, smoking cigarettes, some medications, diet (what and when you eat) and lack of exercise also have a detrimental effect on sleep quality.



Other contributing factors include:

- societal norms that promote a “we-never-close” mentality
- the ubiquitous presence of information technology
- poor sleep environment
- disruption of circadian rhythms, the 24-hour cycle in human cognitive and physical performance, which can be affected, for example, by time zone changes, shift work or caring for a newborn

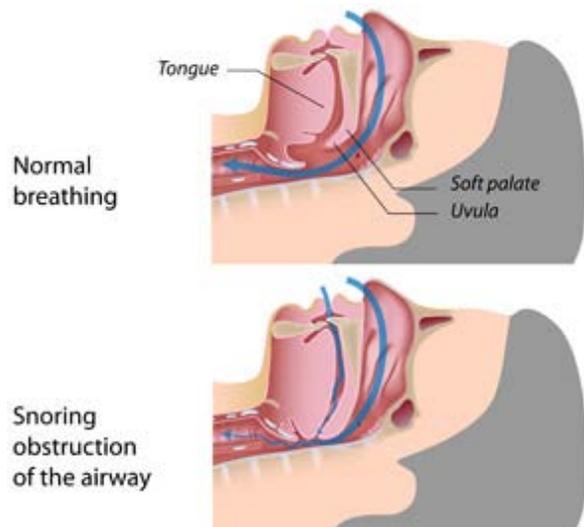
Many physical and mental health factors contribute to [insomnia](#) (difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep). Restless leg syndrome, a neurological disorder that causes discomfort, also causes wakefulness. Chronic insomnia and restless leg syndrome are each believed to afflict about 10 percent of the U.S. population.

Did you know?



Adequate rest is considered so important that the federal government added sleep as a topic in [Healthy People 2020](#), now in its third decade as a national initiative aimed at improving the health of Americans.

In addition, of an estimated 90 million Americans who are believed to snore, about half have obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), according to the [American Sleep Apnea Association](#). Experts say snoring and OSA can both be caused or made worse by obesity, large tongue and tonsils, aging, and possibly head and neck shape. OSA—often characterized by loud snoring, restlessness, gasping and extended pauses in breathing that disrupt sleep patterns—must be diagnosed and treated under the direction of a qualified medical professional.



FACTSHEET

Getting Enough Sleep Improves Safety, Health and Well-being



What Should You Do?

If you think you and others in your household could benefit from getting more sleep, here are some suggestions:

1. Adopt a consistent sleep-wake cycle, even on your days off.
2. Shut off electronic devices before sleep; don't use them in the bedroom.
3. Practice relaxation techniques such as taking a warm bath, stretching or yoga, slow breathing or meditation.
4. If you are experiencing pain, chronic insomnia, feel overtired during the day or your bed partner complains about snoring, seek medical advice.
5. Avoid daytime naps.
6. Make time for rigorous daily exercise.
7. Create an environment conducive to rest. The room should be cool, dark and quiet. Ear plugs, eye shades, a fan or other "white noise" may be helpful. Ambiance and bed comfort are also important.
8. Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, nicotine, and heavy or spicy meals before sleeping. Some people use herbal remedies to promote sleepiness.
9. If you work at night, ask your onsite medical team or doctor for recommendations to help you better manage your sleep-wake cycle.
10. If you can't sleep, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends keeping a [sleep diary](#) to help you uncover and address contributing factors.

