

# *Have a Good Night Sleep!*

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**W**e need sleep to survive. A good night of sleep is very important to our overall health and ability to function effectively throughout the day. However, when our lives become busy, sleep becomes less of a priority for many of us. Getting a good night sleep is essential for your well-being. Not getting enough sleep can make you feel out of sorts and unfocused. It can even make you feel out of sync with situations and people around you, whether it be family, friends, or coworkers. Sleep is important because it affects our mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

It is important to get the sleep you need so you can wake up energized and ready to embrace your day. The amount of sleep one requires varies from person to person but generally ranges from 6-8 hours. Some people need as little as 5 hours while others might only feel refreshed after 10 hours!

How do you know if you get your required amount of sleep? Here are some signs and symptoms that show that your body might not be getting the right amount of rest that it needs in order to function at an optimal level:

## **Signs that you lack sleep**

- You have trouble concentrating and remembering the simplest things/ideas such as the dates/times of meetings, where you put your keys, how you spell words or even the name of a person you meet a few minutes before!
- You tend to fall asleep while at your desk, using a computer or reading.
- You usually wake up unusually late on weekends.
- You get irritated very easily, or feel depressed and/or suffer mood swings.
- Your mind and body tries to 'resist' getting up and you end up hitting the snooze button repeatedly.
- You get flu/viral infections more easily. (As your immunity to diseases is reduced)

### **Tips for a better night's sleep**

- a. Avoid these at least 2 hours before bedtime as they tend to interfere with sleep: strenuous exercise, smoking (Nicotine is a stimulant and can make it difficult to fall asleep), caffeine, alcohol and too much water (as they make you get out of bed to the bathroom more often!).
- b. Visualization. Focus all your attention on about repetitive or mindless things will help your brain to shut down and adjust to sleep. You could imagine yourself counting small pebbles or sheep.
- c. Relax before going to bed. Spending quiet time can make falling asleep easier. This may include meditation, relaxation and/or breathing exercises, or taking a warm bath. You could listen to your favourite instrumental music or watch a short 30 minute drama that may help you fall asleep.
- d. Make your bedroom peaceful and comfortable. Make sure your room is well ventilated and the temperature just right for you. And try to keep it quiet. And reduce the amount of light in your room as much as possible.
- e. Try a light snack that is high in carbohydrates such as a small biscuit or a plain bagel might help you relax.
- f. Acupressure: Place a golf ball (or a smooth stone/pebble) on the floor and using your bare feet, step on it. You can do this sitting down on a chair. Hold the pressure for about 5 minutes before repeating the process on the other feet. You are stimulating the solar plexus region which helps to calm the entire body.
- g. An amino acid called tryptophan, found in milk, turkey, and peanuts, helps the brain produce serotonin, a chemical that sends messages between nerve cells and causes feelings of sleepiness and helps you relax. Try drinking warm milk or eat a slice of toast with peanut butter/slice of turkey or a bowl of cereal before bedtime.
- h. Don't do anything stimulating. Don't read anything job related or watch a stimulating TV program (commercials and news shows tend to be alerting). Don't expose yourself to bright light. The light gives cues to your brain that it is time to wake up.



Even though we are all stressed and affected by external or internal influences, we should be grateful that there are lots of ways in which we can improve the quality of sleep so that we wake up energized, refreshed and ready to meet the day's challenges.