

# ***BETter Living ...***

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**October 4, 2018**

## **Keys to Embracing Aging – Sleep**

Do you get enough sleep? Sleep impacts your overall health and quality of life, including the way you look, feel, and perform on a daily basis. While sleeping, your body repairs muscles, consolidates memories, and regulates hormones and appetite. We will cover how much sleep you need, states of sleep, and recommendations to help you sleep.

### **How Much Sleep is Needed?**

There are several factors that determine how much sleep you need, two include: genetics and hereditary. The National Sleep Foundation recommends the average hours of sleep are:

- **Birth – 2 months:** 10.5 to 18 hours
- **2 – 12 months:** 14 to 15 hours
- **12 -18 months:** 13 to 15 hours
- **18 months – 3 years:** 12 to 14 hours
- **3 – 5 years:** 11 to 13 hours
- **5 – 12 years:** 9 to 11 hours
- **Adolescents:** at least 8.5 to 9.5 hours
- **Adults:** 7 to 9 hours

### **States of Sleep**

#### **Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) or “quiet” sleep:**

- Blood supply to the muscles is increased
- Energy is restored
- Tissue growth and repair occurs
- Important hormones are released for growth and development

#### **Rapid Eye Movement (REM) or “active” sleep:**

- Brain is active
- Dreams occur
- Body becomes immobile
- Breathing and heart rate are irregular

### **Recommendations to Help You Sleep**

- Use your bed to sleep, avoid reading, conversation, or television.
- Restrict time in bed if you are lying awake.
- Exercise in the afternoon or early evening, not within a few hours of sleep.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol at least 3 to 4 hours before going to bed.
- Try to go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time each morning.
- If you cannot fall asleep within 20 minutes, get out of bed and participate in a quiet, relaxing activity and return to bed when you are sleepy.
- Eat a balanced diet and don't eat heavy meals before bedtime.
- Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, visualization, or meditation at bedtime.
- Keep a steady room temperature in your bedroom (not too warm).

- Make the bedroom a safe place, with locks on the door, a smoke alarm, telephone, and good lighting within reach of the bed.
- Get treatment for allergies, colds, or sinus problems.
- If you snore, avoid sleeping on your back and elevate your head.
- Wake up to the sun, or use bright lights in the morning to reset the body's biological clock.
- Do not lie in bed once awake in the morning.

Sleep prepares you to concentrate, make decisions, and fully engage in school, work, and social activities. If you are consistently having trouble sleeping, please talk to your doctor. Sleep is a necessity for feeling your best, staying healthy, performing at your best, and maximizing your potential for optimal aging throughout your life.

Make sure you get enough sleep!

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