

You Snooze, You Win: How Sleep Helps You Succeed

Sleep is a major factor in maintaining your health! It influences everything: mood, physical fitness, and even speech!



DID YOU KNOW??

The Anglo-Saxon root of the word “nightmare” is actually used to mean a suffocating evil spirit that only visits at night.

Culture has major influence on how long, how often, when, AND where you sleep!

Sleep's primary function has been hypothesized to be energy conservation because the body's temperature actually lowers when you sleep!

The average yawn lasts 6 seconds!

“Soldier,” “Starfish,” “Log,” “Fetus,” and “Yearner” are all names for sleep positions! Can you guess what they look like?

Dreams are believed to actually refine and improve recent memories to make them more useful in the future!

A lack of sleep has been linked to all of the following:

Diabetes (recent research suggests that optimizing sleep duration and quality may be important means of improving blood sugar control in persons with Type 2 diabetes.)

Cardiovascular Disease (sleep apnea can lead to increased blood pressure, stroke, and irregular heartbeats.)

Obesity (there is a connection between short sleep duration and excess body weight. This association has been reported *in all age groups*.)

Depression (the relationship between sleep and depression is complex. Recent research has indicated that depressive symptoms may decrease once sleep apnea has been effectively treated and sufficient sleep restored.)

How to Get the Most Out of Your Zzzz...

Believe it or not, “sleep hygiene” is not only a real thing, but it actually helps you maintain your health through good sleep habits!

- Go to bed at the same time each night and rise at the same time each morning.
- Make sure your bedroom is a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment, which is neither too hot nor too cold.
- Make sure your bed is comfortable and use it only for sleeping and not for other activities, such as reading, watching TV, or listening to music.
- Remove all TVs, computers, and other "gadgets" from the bedroom.
- Avoid large meals before bedtime.

So what is the ultimate goal with these practices? Essentially, you'll be conditioning your body to know when it's time to sleep by creating a healthy habit and rhythm before, during, and after sleep.

Consider how difficult it is to adapt very quickly to a forced change. It's confusing and often times causes anxiety. Forcing your body to fall asleep just because you lay down in bed is very similar. Your body, including your brain, has to figure out what's going on (which takes some time). Giving your brain and body a “heads up” makes for easier and more fulfilling sleeping!

Why it's Okay to Have a Smart Mouth: How Oral Hygiene Affects the Heart

Basics

Your heart is in charge of pumping every drop of blood in your body, which means it touches everything your blood touches. As the blood travels through all those blood vessels, *like those found in your mouth*, it can pick up different kinds of bacteria. All of these bacteria then travel back to the heart, posing a threat to its health!

By not brushing your teeth, bacteria have a chance to not only grow but also settle into the jaw bone, gums, and surrounding tissue of the mouth, all which can become painfully infected.

Reward

By keeping up a clean mouth, you're helping your entire body stay healthy! You're preventing heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, and your breath gets to minty fresh the entire time! The results are also visible: your teeth and gums have the potential to be stronger and cleaner looking and your breath fresher smelling.

Keep in mind that it's a step by step process, and that preventative care has a cyclical pattern: it doesn't work if you only do one part because everything relies on following through!



Risks

When bacteria are allowed to enter the blood stream, it can do a number of things to harm your blood vessels and heart:

- Build-up of plaque along the walls of your veins and arteries (you know that gritty slime that gets on your teeth after you don't brush? Imagine that in your veins! Gross!!)
- Release toxins that weaken the walls of the heart and blood vessels
- Increase the likelihood of clots

Prevention

A healthy diet and proper care of your teeth can be a big step in preventative care! Consider the following:

- Cut down on your intake of gum, sugar, and soda (all of these cause the enamel on your teeth to weaken and make it easier to let in the bacteria.)
- Floss your gums and scrub your tongue (both of these actions discourage bacteria to grow and help keep the tissue in your mouth strong.)

Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssleep/>

<http://sleepdisorders.about.com/od/sleepandgeneralhealth/a/What-Are-The-Side-Effects-Of-Sleep-Deprivation.htm>

http://www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/heart-disease-oral-health

https://www.deltadentalins.com/oral_health/heart.html

<http://www.howsleepworks.com>

As always, if you have questions, comments, or concerns please let me know. I'm always here to talk and listen!

- Ann Keidatz, R.N. B.S.N.