

The Necessity of Sleep

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Why Are We So Tired?

Who remembers the “good old days” when there was nothing on TV after midnight or so (when they played the Star Spangled Banner)? If so, then you might even remember having to get off the couch to change the channel (although there were not many to choose from). A home computer? The internet? A cell phone? Not even part of the picture back then. Yes, those were simpler times, but getting enough sleep was much less of an issue then.

Fast forward to today, where there is 24-hour programming for just about any interest one might have. The majority of us have cell phones / tablets that allow us unlimited access to the internet where we can surf for as long as we can stay awake. Oh yeah, and as a society, we are basically sleep deprived. We are surrounded by constant stimulation, and it might be killing us.

For some reason, getting the proper amount of sleep is viewed with less admiration as getting by on very little sleep. When we don't get the right amount of quality sleep, we are less effective, less safe (at work and on the road), less healthy, and less happy. Sleep cannot be ignored, cheated or bought in a store. It needs to be prioritized, and in the case of those with sleep disorders, analyzed and optimized.

A Message From Dr. Whitney By Dr Courtney Whitney, Board Certified Sleep Physician, Owner, Medical Director WSDC

In recent years we have made tremendous progress in identifying the importance of sleep and the consequences of insufficient sleep. In a culture where the average person gets 6.5 hours of sleep a night (and at times much less) we see an increase in poor health and accidents that would otherwise be preventable. We used to believe that when we slept our brains and body would be inactive but, in reality, our brains during sleep are actually *more* active. The process results in rejuvenation of the mind and facilitates optimal brain function and memory.

Insufficient sleep results in fatigue, which markedly increases the risk of accidents. Good examples of this would be the Exxon Valdez and Chernobyl, as well as the frequency of motor vehicle accidents. It is estimated that over 100,000 motor vehicle accidents a year are due to insufficient sleep.

A good night's sleep is a basic building block of good health and is equally as essential as food and water. Insufficient sleep is linked to the development of heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes and obesity, so don't neglect the importance sleep plays in your mental and physical health. If you believe your sleep is impaired, consider analyzing it with through the sleep program at this hospital. See your healthcare provider for a referral. We would be happy to help!

Do you Think You Might Have A Sleep Disorder?

Yes No

- Do you snore?
- Are you excessively tired during the day?
- Have you been told you stop breathing during sleep?
- Do you have a history of hypertension?
- Is your neck size > 17 inches (male) or > 16 inches (female)?
- Do you wake up to use the bathroom more than twice a night?
- Have you ever fallen asleep while driving?

Answering “yes” to two (or more) of these questions may be a positive screen for Obstructive Sleep Apnea. Patient should consider talking with their Health Care Provider about a referral for a sleep evaluation.

We Can Help!

Discover real solutions to your sleep problems by talking with your Health Care Provider about a sleep study at:

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So How Much is Enough?

There is no absolute correct amount of sleep, but the National Sleep Foundation offers us the ranges in the chart to the right. A little more or less may be the right amount for you, but these figures can get you in the ballpark. Pregnant women will tell you that getting 7-9 hours is a breeze in the first trimester, but often struggle to get good, uninterrupted sleep as the pregnancy progresses.

Teenagers seem to be most affected by the amount of distractions/stimulation available to them. Couple this with the fact that an adolescent's natural sleep pattern shifts toward later times for both falling asleep and waking up. Many school districts fail to recognize this when they set up the school day / bus schedule. When it is an option, high school age kids should start later in the day than elementary age kids.

Newborn	14-17 hours
Infants	12-15 hours
Toddlers	11-14 hours
Pre-School	10-13 hours
School Age	9-11 hours
Teenager	8-10 hours
Young Adult	7-9 hours
Adult	7-9 hours
Older Adult	7-8 hours

CPAP Talk By Susan Gunwall, LPN, WSDC Clinical Coordinator and Director of Operations

Do I have to wear CPAP?

If you have been diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), it means that while you sleep your airway collapses and impairs breathing. Some of these breathing disturbances can last over a minute and put great strain on your body when you arouse from the apnea. These arousals also keep you from getting into all of the stages of sleep that are required for optimal health (you keep waking up). The three main therapies that we discuss with our patients are:

Oral Appliance: This is a device that you insert in your mouth when you go to bed. It is designed to advance the lower jaw forward which for some people can keep the airway open and eliminate apneas. It works best for people with mild sleep apnea, is often not covered by insurance, cannot be measured for compliance/effectiveness and sometimes produces teeth and jaw pain.

Surgery: There is a procedure called a Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty (UPPP). It involves the removal of the tonsils as well as some of the tissue in the throat. It is painful, difficult to recover from and not as effective as one might think.

CPAP: CPAP stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. It serves as an "air stent" to keep the airway open during all phases of sleep. A person wears a mask attached to a small, quiet machine that blows a specific pressure of air into the nose or mouth to keep the airway open. It is painless, measurable, adjustable, and with proper mask fit and education works almost every time. When diagnosed with OSA, most insurance companies provide some level of coverage for CPAP and supplies.

Sleep Fact:

Healthy sleep is needed for consolidating and optimizing memories. It plays a vital role in learning.

About Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants

Founded in 2008, Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC) was created to serve patients living in areas where access to comprehensive sleep medicine has not been available. WSDC is owned and operated by Dr. Courtney Whitney, who is Board Certified in Sleep Medicine.

Instead of making patients drive to the next larger town, or settling for diagnostic-only sleep testing services, we partner with hospitals in smaller towns to provide the same level of sleep medicine care that would be found in a major metro market.

Hospitals that partner with WSDC, are able to offer a high quality, AASM accredited sleep medicine program to their patients right at their home town hospital. WSDC diagnoses and treats all 84 known sleep disorders. **If you are reading this in a waiting room or clinic lobby, your hospital partners with WSDC.**

Patients who feel they may have a sleep disorder are encouraged to talk to their healthcare provider about their symptoms. A simple one page screening form can often help determine the need for an overnight sleep study.

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