

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

SLEEP...



Sleep has become more and more fleeting for Americans as stress and worry contribute to tossing and turning during the night hours. During the pandemic stress and changes to life routines makes regular quality sleep even more difficult for both adults and children. 60 million Americans are affected by chronic sleep disorders and sleep problems that impair physical well-being and proper brain function. Sleep disorders and chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, depression, and anxiety have a correlation. However, the link between lack of sleep and chronic diseases has been inconclusive since underlying behavioral or hereditary factors could be to blame rather than lack of sleep.

Sleep improves emotional brain function but determining if mood is caused by lack of sleep or causing poor sleep could be difficult to verify. Checking in with a health professional if lack of sleep and poor mental health is a persistent problem is a good idea. Getting a good night sleep is important but sleep is not always an easy goal to obtain. To get a better night's sleep try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, this adjusts the internal clock and keeps it regulated. Make sure to exercise every day to get restful SLEEP.



Caffeine can prevent a person from sleeping and that includes not only coffee but sodas and energy drinks. Try not to use caffeine for 2-3 hours before bed or removing it from your day altogether if needed. Caffeine is a stimulant and too much could deter restful sleep or stop the onset of rest. Nicotine is also a stimulant, using nicotine like cigarettes, cigars or a vape can cause restless sleep or waking during the night. To quit contact one of the 11 free Quit Centers throughout the state of NJ. The Quit Center in Cape May is Cape Assist (609-522-5960) and in Atlantic County, Atlantic Prevention Resources (609-804-QUIT). The craving for nicotine often wakes users during the night and quitting can offer a better night's sleep. Alcohol can cause interrupted or unsound sleep because it interferes with sleep stages during the night that are needed to give a feeling of restfulness.



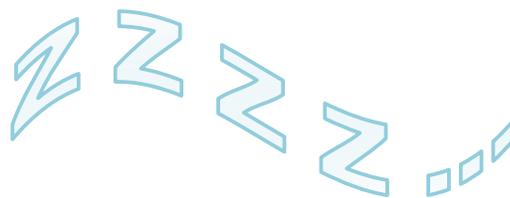
Family & Community Health Sciences

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During the day take time to de-stress and find something that is relaxing like, exercise, a hobby or meditation. Taking a break from electronics can create a more peaceful sleep as well, try 'unplugging' an hour or two before bed to get the 7-9 hours per night needed for adults. Babies sleep a lot because they are growing and developing and may sleep 16-18 hours per day. School aged children need about 9.5 hours per night again because they are growing and developing but not as much as babies. Children need routine and having a regular bedtime routine to encourage good rest for the night is critical. This might include bath time, snack time

or story time but having a schedule is important. After age 60 sleep becomes shorter and more interrupted by waking and even a lighter type of sleep, as we age, we sleep less sometimes due to certain medications. Do not eat a huge meal too close to bed, it could cause digestion problems or overall discomfort. Lying awake can be frustrating, get up and change positions, take a warm bath, or read a book and try going back to bed a little more relaxed. Focus on something that is soothing and think about drifting or floating to emphasis peacefulness when trying to fall asleep. Sleep is essential but that does not mean it comes easy to everyone, these tips may take some time to start working but are well worth the effort.



References:

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