



SLEEP (AND REST)

OVERVIEW

Sleep is essential to the maintenance of overall physical health. Sleep affects physical growth by influencing muscle development, healing, and tissue repair. The proper amount of sleep recommended for an individual varies based upon age and decreases as one gets older. Proper rest boosts the immune system and regulates hormones that affect blood sugar and hunger. The amount of sleep one gets can influence the prevention or development of heart and kidney disease, high blood pressure, infection, obesity and weight gain, and stroke.

In addition to physical health, sleep is directly connected to several other dimensions of health:
Mental health- Coping skills, depression, emotional control, lack of motivation, stress, and suicidal tendencies are influenced by sleep.

Intellectual health- Attention, brain function, creativity, decision-making, learning, memory, and problem-solving are all improved by sleep.

Occupational health- Sleep helps accuracy and efficiency when performing work-related tasks, which impacts productivity and job performance.

Social health- Behaviors including driving, impulsivity, and taking risks can be affected by sleep, which can determine the interactions we have with others. An estimated 100,000 car accidents leading to roughly 1,500 deaths are caused in part by sleepiness.¹

Sleep occurs in a 90- to 110-minute cycle of 5 phases beginning with light sleep (phase 1), followed by the slowing of brain waves until reaching deep sleep (phase 4). Dreams, as well as increased breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure take place during REM sleep (phase 5).²

RESOURCES

¹ <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/why>

² <https://www.sleepassociation.org/patients-general-public/what-is-sleep/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information, tools, and resources about sleep and rest, visit:

<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20906153,00.html>

<http://www.journalsleep.org/>

<https://medlineplus.gov/sleepdisorders.html>

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/howmuch>

<https://www.sleepassociation.org/patients-general-public/what-is-sleep/>

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<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/guide/sleep-101>