

Health Concepts

December 2023

Sleep is a biological necessity.

PREFACE

Sleep has become a precious commodity - we love it and need it, but rarely get enough of it. Modern-day living does not always embrace the necessity of adequate sleep. Yet, people must try to get enough sleep regularly.

Sleep is a vital, often neglected, component of every person's overall health and well-being. Sleep is important because it enables the body to repair itself and be fit and ready for another day. During sleep, your body is working to support healthy brain function and maintain your physical health. Sleep is as important as exercise or diet for maintaining good health.

Healthy sleep is important for cognitive functioning, mood, mental health, cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, and metabolic health. Not getting enough quality sleep regularly raises the risk of many diseases and disorders. These range from heart disease and stroke to obesity and dementia.

While you sleep, many important processes happen, including muscle repair, protein synthesis, tissue growth, hormone release, and clearing debris from the system, thereby boosting immunity.

Sleep is a powerful stress reliever. It improves concentration, regulates mood, and sharpens judgment and decision-making.

There are lifestyle steps you can take to improve sleep for better health.

Good Sleep for Good Health.

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NUTRITIONAL FACTS

पपीता (Hindi)
பப்பாளி (Tamil)
బొప్పాయి (Telugu)



PAPAYA

Papaya is the fruit of the *Carica papaya* plant belonging to the family Caricaceae. India produces more than 40% of the world's supply of papayas. Papaya fruit is edible raw when ripe, and its young fruit, leaves, and shoots are eatable as cooked vegetables. Papaya has green-colored skin when immature but turns into shades of orange while ripening. Raw papaya contains a high amount of latex. Papaya contains papain enzyme, which mimics the actions of the natural digestive enzyme pepsin that helps in the digestion of protein. One small papaya (150gm) contains 59 calories. The papaya fruit is high in vitamins C and A, as well as fiber and healthy plant compounds. Papayas also contain healthy antioxidants known as carotenoids — particularly one type called lycopene.

- **Has powerful antioxidant effects:** - which may reduce oxidative stress and lower your risk of several diseases.
- **Anti-cancer properties** - the antioxidants in papaya may reduce cancer risk and perhaps even slow cancer progression.
- **Fights inflammation** - chronic inflammation is the root cause of many diseases. Papayas are very high in carotenoids that can reduce inflammation.
- **Improves digestion** - papaya has been shown to improve constipation and other symptoms of Irritable bowel symptoms. The seeds and leaves of the plant have also been used to treat ulcers.
- **Aids in skin protection** - powerful antioxidants in papaya helps skin recover from sun damage and may defend against wrinkling.

NOTE: The unripe papaya fruit is possibly unsafe. You must take precautions while eating raw papaya during pregnancy, as it contains a high amount of latex, which induces contractions.

MEDICAL UPDATE

Influenza, often called the flu, is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs, part of the respiratory system. A virus causes the flu. Most people with the flu get better on their own. However, influenza can cause serious complications for some groups of people.

In general, people at higher risk of complications are young children, pregnant women, adults over age 65 years, and people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Flu vaccination prevents illnesses, medical visits, hospitalizations, and deaths every year. Getting a flu shot will often protect you from a serious case of the flu. And although the flu shot doesn't always provide total protection, it's worth getting.

Your protection from a flu vaccine declines over time. Yearly vaccinations are needed for the best protection. Flu viruses are constantly changing, so flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses. Flu vaccines have a good safety record.

PREVENTIVE PEARLS

- Flu shot: Your best bet for avoiding influenza
- Wear a face Mask when you go outdoors.

"Sleep is an investment in the energy you need to be effective tomorrow."

--Tom Roth.

How much sleep do you need?

The amount of sleep you need depends on various factors, especially your age. Healthy adults need at least seven hours of sleep per night. Babies, young children, and teens need even more sleep to enable their growth and development. The guidelines (Fig.1) present the recommended range of nightly sleep duration for healthy individuals. In some cases, sleeping an hour more or less than the general range may be acceptable based on a person's circumstances.

The quality of your sleep is just as important as the quantity.

Getting more sleep is important but remember that it is not just about sleep quantity. Quality sleep matters too, because when your sleep is fragmented or non-restorative, you do not feel refreshed.

- Steps to improve sleep quality
- Be consistent - sticking to the same sleep schedule every day, even on weekends.
- Choosing the best mattress and pillows that are supportive and comfortable.
- Minimizing potential disruptions from light and sound while optimizing your bedroom temperature.
- Disconnecting from electronic devices like TVs, mobile phones, and laptops for a half-hour or more before bed.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
- Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.

Good sleep habits- "sleep hygiene" can help you get a good night's sleep.

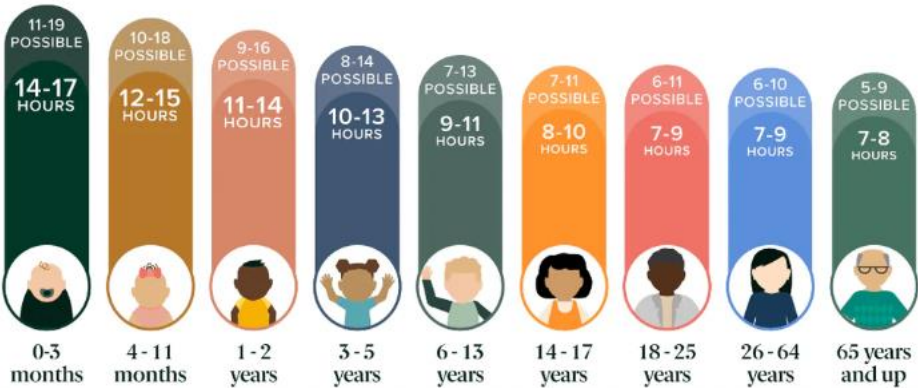


Fig.1. Recommended Guidelines for duration of sleep

Signs of poor sleep quality include not feeling rested even after getting enough sleep, repeatedly waking up during the night, and experiencing symptoms of sleep disorders (such as snoring or gasping for air).

| Signs of sleep deprivation |
|-------------------------------|
| Decreased communication. |
| Performance deterioration. |
| Lack of concentration. |
| Poor cognitive assimilation. |
| Inappropriate mood behavior. |
| Increased sickness. |
| Increased intake of caffeine. |
| Greater risk-taking behavior. |

Insufficient sleep has been linked to the development of several chronic diseases and conditions, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression.

Key sleep disorders

Insomnia - characterized by an inability to initiate or maintain sleep. It may also take the form of early morning awakening, in which the individual awakens several hours early and is unable to resume sleeping.

Narcolepsy - excessive daytime sleepiness (including episodes of irresistible sleepiness) combined with sudden muscle weakness

Restless Legs Syndrome - characterized by an unpleasant "creeping" sensation, often feeling like it is originating in the lower legs, but often associated with aches and pains throughout the legs. This causes difficulty initiating sleep and is relieved by movement of the leg, such as walking or kicking.

Sleep Apnea - persons with sleep apnea characteristically make periodic gasping or "snorting" noises, during which their sleep is momentarily interrupted. Those with sleep apnea may also experience excessive daytime sleepiness, as their sleep is commonly interrupted and may not feel restorative.

END NOTE

Prioritize getting enough sleep each night to stay happy, healthy, and sharp.

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