

What Are Sleep Deprivation and Deficiency?



Sleep deprivation is a condition that occurs if you don't get enough sleep. Sleep deficiency is a broader concept. It occurs if you have one or more of the following:

- You don't get enough sleep (sleep deprivation)
- You sleep at the wrong time of day
- You don't sleep well or get all the different types of sleep your body needs
- You have a sleep disorder that prevents you from getting enough sleep or causes poor-quality sleep

This topic focuses on sleep deficiency.

Sleeping is a basic human need, like eating, drinking, and breathing. Like these other needs, sleeping is vital for good health and well-being throughout your lifetime.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 3 adults

in the United States reported not getting enough rest or sleep every day.

Nearly 40% of adults report falling asleep during the day without meaning to at least once a month. Also, an estimated 50 to 70 million Americans have chronic, or ongoing, sleep disorders.

Sleep deficiency can lead to physical and mental health problems, injuries, loss of productivity, and even a greater likelihood of death. To understand sleep deficiency, it helps to understand [what makes you sleep](#) and [how it affects your health](#).

Sleep deficiency can interfere with work, school, driving, and social functioning. You might have trouble learning, focusing, and reacting. Also, you might find it hard to judge other people's emotions and reactions. Sleep deficiency also can make you feel frustrated, cranky, or worried in social situations.

The symptoms of sleep deficiency may differ between children and adults. Children who are sleep deficient might be overly active and have problems

Interested in learning more about the science behind how sleep works, including sleep/wake cycles, and sleep phases & stages? Visit our [How Sleep Works](#) section for

paying attention. They also might misbehave, and their school performance can suffer.

more
information.

Sleep deficiency is linked to many chronic health problems, including [heart disease](#), kidney disease, [high blood pressure](#), diabetes, [stroke](#), [obesity](#), and depression.

Sleep deficiency is also linked to a higher chance of injury in adults, teens, and children. For example, sleepiness while driving (not related to alcohol) is responsible for serious car crash injuries and death. In older adults, sleep deficiency may be linked to a higher chance of falls and broken bones.

Sleep deficiency has also played a role in human mistakes linked to tragic accidents, such as nuclear reactor meltdowns, grounding of large ships, and plane crashes.

A common myth is that people can learn to get by on little sleep with no negative effects. However, research shows that getting enough quality sleep at the right times is vital for mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.