



Are you aware of the health consequences of having sleepless nights?

When was the last time you got a good night's sleep?

According to the Annual Sleep in America survey, 46% of the people between ages 13-64 years old say they rarely get a good night of sleep.

Quality sleep allows time for your mind and body to recover from the day's work and helps our brains and bodies rejuvenate. Without it our mood, temperament, and judgement can be negatively affected.

Good sleep habits can help promote weight loss, stress management, and a healthy immune system.

Common Sleep Conditions

Insomnia

Insomnia is more common than you think. People with insomnia have trouble falling and/or staying asleep.

Insomnia can be a result of immediate stress such as family, work, or trauma. It may be a symptom of medical conditions, medications, sleep disorders, or substance abuse.

If you have insomnia, you may:

- Lie awake for a long time before you fall asleep
- Only sleep for short periods
- Be awake for most part of the night
- Feel as if you haven't slept

Lack of sleep can cause other symptoms, such as feeling tired during the day or when you first awake. Insomnia can cause you to feel anxious, depressed, or irritated and you may have trouble staying focused.

Sleep Apnea

Sleep Apnea is a potentially serious sleep disorder in which someone's breathing is interrupted while they sleep.

Sleep apnea can be caused by blockage of the airway, called obstructive sleep apnea, or by a dysfunction in the brain, called central sleep apnea.

If you find yourself feeling more sleepy than usual during the day and others say that you snore loudly, gasp for air, or stop breathing while you sleep, it could be a sign of sleep apnea.

If you are concerned about sleep apnea, check with your doctor to see if you may benefit from seeing a sleep specialist.

WAYS TO BETTER SLEEP

Sleep Hygiene

Make sure to have a quiet and comfortable space to sleep. Keep it dark in the night and bright during the day. Make sure the room is well-ventilated and a comfortable temperature.

Having a consistent exercise routine may help you sleep better at night. However, try to fit in vigorous exercise at least 3 hours before bedtime as this may keep you awake.

Relax prior to bed. Activities such as reading, meditation, or yoga may help you relieve the stress from a hard day and could lead to a more restful night.

Go to bed at a regular time and avoid napping in the late afternoon.

Bedtime Routine

Bedtime routines are not just for the kids. Adults and children both benefit from having consistent bedtimes.

Try to avoid all screens an hour before bed. The blue light emitted from a bright tablet, TV, smart phone, or computer screen may suppress melatonin. This can make it harder for you to follow your body's sleep cues.

Avoid eating heavy meals, caffeine, or drinking alcohol before bedtime.

Consider areas in your routine that may be impacting your quantity and quality of sleep and make any possible adjustments that may help.

Sleep Aids

Medications such as benzodiazepines, zolpidem, or eszopiclone may improve your difficulty of falling asleep and may prolong total sleep time an extra 30 to 60 minutes.

These medications have side effects such as daytime sleepiness, lightheadedness, and memory impairment. Due to the side effects and the habit forming nature of these medications, long term use is not recommended.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications or supplements such as diphenhydramine, and melatonin may also reduce the time to fall asleep for the short term, but the long term use of these OTC products is also not recommended.

Sleep Debt

It is not uncommon to run short on rest during the weekdays and plan on making up for it on the weekend. This is sometimes referred as "sleep debt" and you could spend a lot of time trying to pay it off.

The problem is as you continue to cut your sleep short it can affect work performance, memory, concentration, and mood. Factor how much sleep you need into your daily schedule. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day.

We often regard sleep as an indulgence but getting adequate sleep is just as important to our health and wellbeing as diet and exercise.

Evaluating Sleep Medicine

When are sleep medications no longer needed?

If you have been taking medications and making changes to help you sleep and your sleep has improved, it may be time to stop sleep medications.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist about how to transition away from these medications safely.

What if my sleep medicine does not help with my sleep issues?

If you still are not sleeping well despite using a sleep medication, get support from a mental health professional or talk to your doctor about your concerns.

We care about your health and well-being and our staff of registered nurse care managers, mental health professionals, wellness coaches, and clinical pharmacists are here to help. If you have questions, please call 855-586-2568, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT.