



Sleep Yourself Well



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Maintaining adequate amounts of quality sleep is essential to optimal health and well-being.

If you're feeling run-down, struggling to focus, or feeling irritable for no clear reason, you may want to look into your sleep patterns. In a fast-paced environment, many people forgo sleep and overextend themselves to catch up on work and other responsibilities.

But what if you could wake up every morning feeling refreshed, focused, and excited to move through your day?

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY SLEEP

Critical activities occur during the sleep state.¹



Internal organs rest and recover. Tissue repair, muscle growth, and protein synthesis primarily occur during sleep.



Hormones that help regulate appetite control, stress, growth, metabolism, and other bodily functions are released.



Memory consolidation occurs, allowing for the formation and storage of new memories, which is essential for learning new information.

The direct connection between sleep and health inevitably helps improve your quality of life. The benefits of quality sleep include:

- Increased energy to make beneficial lifestyle choices (cooking, exercise, self-care, etc.)
- Strengthened immune system
- Heightened alertness, focus, and creativity
- Improved mood by reducing anxiety, irritability, and mental exhaustion
- Increased libido (sex drive)

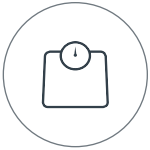
HOW SLEEP DEPRIVATION AFFECTS YOU

There are many factors involved in the relationship between sleep and health. While it may be more difficult to scientifically prove that quality sleep improves health, the negative effects of sleep deprivation are widely documented.



Decline in cognitive function

There are measurable changes in brain activity that occur after a period of sleep deprivation. When you don't get a sufficient amount of sleep, your mental performance suffers, impairing your ability to process new information and perform more complicated tasks. This may also impact your overall mood, focus, and high-level cognitive function. Sleep loss has been shown to impair decision making, which may lead you to make choices that you wouldn't make if rested – this effect may be even more pronounced as we get older.^{2,3}



Weight gain

Individuals who don't get adequate sleep are more likely to gain weight over time. Contributing to this weight gain is an increased amount of calories consumed during the day, particularly high-fat foods consumed later in the evening.⁴



Increased risk of chronic disease

Your body is more susceptible to stress without a good night's sleep. The immune system does not function optimally, and inflammatory proteins and blood sugar levels increase in response to lower levels of insulin being released throughout the night. Chronic short sleep duration is also associated with hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.⁵



Increased risk of accidents and injuries

When you're exhausted, both physically and mentally, there's an increased risk of injuries, errors, and accidents. This tired state of mind may lead to mishaps like stubbing your toe, cutting yourself in the kitchen, falling, or getting into an accident.⁶

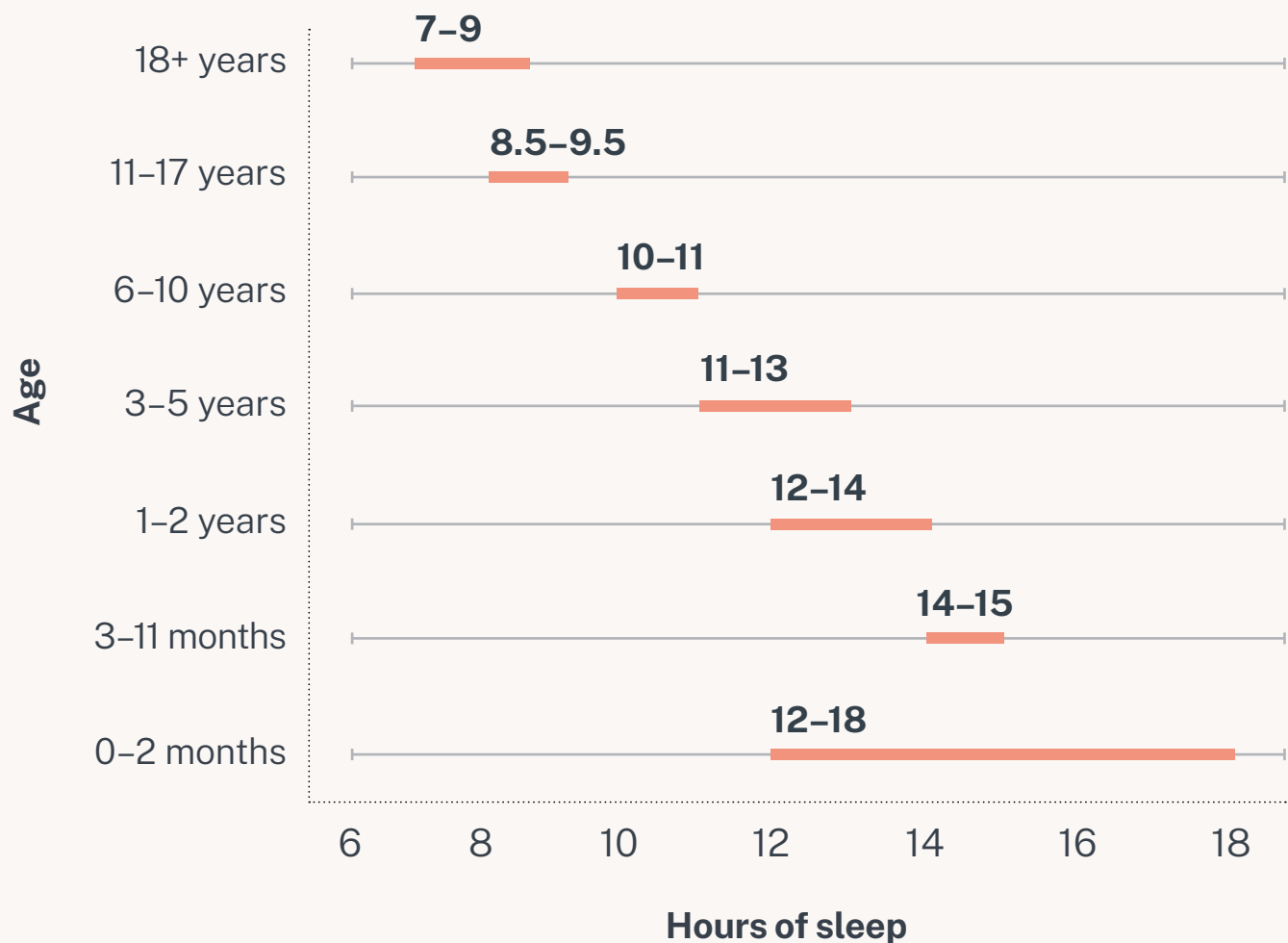


Increased anxiety

Without sufficient rest, you may have trouble keeping your emotions in check. Increased feelings of irritability, anxiety, sadness, and anger are common. You may even find that you are more vulnerable to unprovoked bouts of laughter or tears.^{7,8}

HOW MUCH SLEEP DO YOU REALLY NEED?

Everyone requires quality sleep for optimal health and well-being, but the number of hours vary, depending on the individual and age group. Try experimenting with your sleep patterns to find what works best for you and your specific needs.



Now that you know how much sleep you need and why it's essential to well-being, how can you prepare your body to get into that deep, restful state?

FOOTNOTES

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