

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

What is Sleep Deprivation?

Sleep deprivation occurs when a person fails to get enough sleep at night. How much sleep a person needs varies among individuals, but a fair benchmark puts it between 7-9 hours per night for adults.

The effects of sleep deprivation

Side effects of sleep deprivation can include symptoms that manifest themselves in just a short time of losing quality sleep (as little as one day) or can accumulate over a long period of chronic sleep loss in the form of serious medical conditions.

Performance

- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Lack of overall energy
- Poor decision making abilities
- Lowered alertness
- More likely to make errors
- Memory problems
- Cognitive impairment

Health

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Weight gain/ loss
- Poor immune system

Public Safety

- Sometimes the effects can even be deadly, as in the case of drowsy driving fatalities.



Mood

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Lack of motivation
- Symptoms of depression
- Chronic stress

Causes of sleep deprivation

- Medical issues: Some drugs can interfere with sleep
- Psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety disorder
- Life stresses such as job loss or death of a loved one.
- Environmental factors, such as light, noise, or room temperatures.

What is insomnia/ hypersomnia?

1. Insomnia

Insomnia is a sleep disorder that is characterised by difficulty falling and/or staying asleep. Waking up often during the night and having trouble going back to sleep.

2. Hypersomnia

It refers to either excessive daytime sleepiness or excessive sleeping, is a condition in which a person has trouble staying awake during the day and can fall asleep at any time.



How can I improve my SLEEP HYGIENE

One of the most important sleep hygiene practices is to spend an appropriate amount of time asleep in bed, not too little or too excessive. Sleep needs vary across ages and are especially impacted by lifestyle and health. However, there are recommendations that can provide guidance on how much sleep you need generally. Other good sleep hygiene practices include:



Napping

Napping does not make up for inadequate night time sleep. However, a short nap of 20-30 minutes can help to improve mood, alertness and performance.



Sleeping routine

Establishing a regular relaxing bedtime routine helps the body recognise that it is bedtime. This could include taking warm shower, reading a book, or light stretches. When possible, try to avoid emotional upsetting conversations before attempting to sleep.

Pleasant environment

Ensure adequate exposure to natural light. This is particularly important for individuals who may not venture outside frequently. Exposure to sunlight during the day, as well as darkness at night, helps to maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.



Stimulants

Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, electronic devices and nicotine close to bedtime. While alcohol is well-known to help you fall asleep faster, too much of alcohol before close to bedtime can disrupt sleep in the second half of the night as the body begins to process the alcohol.



Exercising

Exercising promotes good quality sleep. As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, can drastically improve night-time sleep quality. For a good night's sleep, most people should avoid strenuous workouts close to bedtime. However, the effect of intense night time exercise on sleep differs from person to person, so find out what works best for you.



Healthy diet

Steering clear of food that can be disruptive right before sleep. Heavy/spicy foods and carbonated drinks can trigger indigestion. When this occurs close to bedtime, it can lead to painful heartburn that disrupts sleep.



How to help others with sleep deprivation?

1. You could help your friend: Such as driving them to where there have to go, organise their schedule. Hence they have lesser things to worry about and more time to rest.
2. Protect them while they're down: Keep an eye on your friend while crossing the road to ensure their safety.
3. Talk about it: Acknowledge that it's a problem, and they are not alone. Suggest them to seek a counsellor. Don't forget to check in with them regularly.

NOTE:

Sleeping pills can be an effective treatment for insomnia. However, the side effects may include daytime drowsiness, and a build-up for tolerance where your body may be immune to the pills as you grow dependent on it.



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24/7 Mental Health Crisis Hotline
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