

## SLEEP

By Dr. John Fudens

Lack of good, proper, refreshing sleep is a major problem for many people in society. Over 35 million Americans suffer some form of insomnia. Five percent have symptoms chronic or severe enough to seek medical attention. Symptoms of insomnia include but are not limited to restlessness, tossing and turning, waking not refreshed, can't fall asleep, easily awakened by noises or the mind racing with thoughts. Sleep is important to us spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. Sleep is most important for the body to heal itself from damage, tissue regeneration, muscle building, hormone production, fat metabolism, blood sugar and insulin regulation and removing wastes from the body.

Normal sleep patterns occur on a regular basis or at least they are suppose to. The amount of sleep needed depends on many factors including, age, gender, work and physical activity, overall state of health and issues like coffee, alcohol and drug use. Babies may need and often do sleep 14-15 hours while adults may only need 7-9 hours. Women tend to need more sleep than men.

They are two types of sleep: REM (a period of rapid eye movements and dreaming) and non-REM. Non-REM has four levels of brain-wave activity. As we go to sleep, the sleep deepens and brain waves slow down through the four levels until REM sleep is reached which is the most restive. This cycle can be repeated 4-6 times a night.

Factors which can and do cause insomnia include stress, depression, anxiety, sleep apnea, nocturnal hypoglycemia, emotional factors (anger, excitement, etc.), caffeine, alcohol, poor sleep area (bad mattress, noise, light, heat, cold). Night time should be your time to relax and unwind. Listen to your favorite music or relaxing tapes, take a leisure walk around the neighborhood and enjoy the sights and sounds, meditate, read your favorite novel, write in your journal, anything that doesn't stimulate mental/work related activity. Stay away from coffee, alcohol, chocolate and stimulating herbs like ginseng, bee pollen and guarana.

Try not to eat beyond 7-8 pm or have late snacks. To keep the blood glucose/insulin levels stable, use fruits, fruit juice, chamomile tea, or a balanced protein, fat, carbohydrate snack. To help the body sleep better use Vitamin B1 200-300 mgm before bed along with a calcium magnesium supplement (2 parts calcium to 1 part magnesium). Herbs like valerian root, skullcap, passion flower, chamomile, linden balm and lemon balm, rose petals, melatonin, L-tryptophan, L-theanine have a calming effect on the brain and nerve cells.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

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