

# A Focus on Sleeping

Unfortunately, we all know the feeling of fatigue from not getting enough sleep. But there is actually a danger to our health from lack of sleep, or not getting enough sleep over an extended time period.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns that people who suffer from sleep deficit increase their risk of obesity, elevated Body Mass Index (BMI), larger waist circumference, and depression. These problems have been linked to increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Other negative impacts of inadequate sleep include effects on memory storage, creativity and problem solving.

The health risk doesn't just affect adults. Children as young as five years old have been shown to suffer the effects of sleep deprivation.

## Recommended sleep

The CDC recommends each person get 7-9 hours of sleep each night. But they report almost 30% of Americans regularly get less than 6 hours of sleep each night, and over 50 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders or chronic sleep loss.

## What to do

First, you have to realize that you are sleep deprived. Very few people are aware of exactly how much they sleep each night, but you may want to track your sleep if you find yourself feeling exhausted all the time, or if you constantly need caffeine to feel alert throughout the day.

If you are sleep deprived, the CDC has several tips for improving your sleep:

- Keep your bedtimes and wake times on a constant schedule
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- Reserve your bedroom for sleeping only, not as a combination dining room, TV room, exercise room, and home office
- Exercise daily; avoid vigorous exercise for about three (3) hours before bedtime, although gentle stretching is OK
- Avoid eating a large meal in the late evening
- Limit your daily caffeine and alcohol intake, especially use late in the day
- Build in 15 minutes of "quiet time" at the end of the day to wind down
- Make sure your mattress is comfortable (many wear out in 5-7 years)

For more information about sleep deprivation, contact your health care provider, your Concentra health specialist, or visit the CDC's Web site at: [www.cdc.gov/sleep](http://www.cdc.gov/sleep).



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