

The Incredible Importance of Sleep

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1. Studies have shown that about 35% of the population has had insomnia within the previous year.
2. Sleeping at least 7 but preferably 8 hours every night improves the quality of life but also is associated with increased longevity.
3. Sleep decreases inflammation in our body. Inflammation can be measured by getting a blood test called C-reactive protein (CRP) level. Inflammation can cause cancer, heart attacks, strokes and arthritis. This is why people who sleep less have an increase risk of death.
4. Sleep is important for memory. Studies have shown consistently that sleep improves memory as well as performance on cognitive test.
5. Sleep is very important for weight loss. People who sleep less than 7 hours have hormonal changes which make it difficult to lose weight.
6. Everyone knows a good night sleep makes you feel better. It also may well make you live longer and have a better quality of life.
7. When we sleep our brain decides what information is important to save and organizes the information.
8. Our brain actually produces new neurons when we sleep which is referred to as plasticity. This helps prevent dementia.
9. One of the worst things that you can do as a student is to stay up all night studying for a test. You will be much better off if you go to bed early and get a good night's sleep.
10. Lack of sleep is responsible for numerous deaths from automobile accidents and can be just as bad as drinking alcohol before driving.
11. Our brains clean themselves at night when we sleep removing amyloid-beta. Build-up of amyloid-beta is associated with dementia.
12. Sleep apnea is present in approximately 20 to 30% of males and 10 to 15% of females. Obesity is associated with sleep apnea and unfortunately sleep apnea makes it extremely difficult to lose weight. Sleep apnea causes the release of cortisol which is a stress hormone and increases appetite. Leptin and ghrelin are hormones that control hunger and they are negatively affected by inadequate sleep. We can easily screen for sleep apnea using an overnight pulse oximetry which can be completed at home.