Sleeping For Better Health

With the demands of what we have going on in our lives, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day. To get things done throughout our day, most of us wake up earlier and go to bed later. We have put the ever so important task of sleeping at the bottom of our to-do list, but what kind of an impact is that having on our health?

Is Sleep Really That Important?

Let's face it, everyday, we demand a great deal from our bodies. The amount of energy required to stay awake, breathe, digest our food, move, and just about everything else we do throughout the day is staggering. The human body is capable of many things so what does something as simple as sleeping have to do with our health? The answer is easy. It has everything to do with our health.

We often forget sometimes the importance of sleep because it isn't as important as making money to pay the bills or finishing the big presentation coming up. Without the proper amounts of good quality sleep we can find ourselves struggling to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

Signs of Sleep Deprivation

The signs that you may not be getting enough sleep go beyond from just feeling like your tired. Below are some of the most common signs that you may be sleep deprived:

- Hard Handling Stress
- Poor Memory
- Inability to Concentrate
- Increased Appetite
- Vision Problems
- Poor Decision Making
- Diminished Motor Skills
- Relationship Troubles
- Medical Problems
- Mood Swings

These are just the most common signs of sleep deprivation, but if you just haven't been feeling like yourself lately, you might not be getting the quantity and quality of sleep that your body needs.

What Happens When We Sleep?

When we sleep well, we wake up feeling refreshed and alert for our daily activities. Sleep affects how we look, feel and perform on a daily basis, and can have a major impact on our overall quality of life.

If sleep is cut short, the body doesn't have time to complete all of the phases needed for muscle repair, memory consolidation and release of hormones regulating growth and appetite. Then we wake up less prepared to concentrate, make decisions, or engage fully in our tasks and social activities.

Sleep helps us thrive by contributing to a healthy immune system, and can also balance our appetites by helping to regulate levels of the hormones ghrelin and leptin, which play a role in our feelings of hunger and fullness. So when we're sleep deprived, we may feel the need to eat more, which can lead to weight gain.

The one-third of our lives that we spend sleeping, far from being "unproductive," plays a direct role in how full, energetic and successful the other two-thirds of our lives can be.

How Much Sleep Is Too Much?

The amount of sleep that we need depends on our age. Believe it or not, there is a thing such as too much sleep. When we sleep, or levels of cortisol, a hormone that is produced in times of stress are reduced in the body and build up in production. When we begin to wake up, cortisol is released back into the body and causes us to be alert. If we sleep for too long, our cortisol levels drop so low that it leaves us feeling tired and groggy to start the day.

Children need anywhere from 9-11 hours of sleep a night for important development and cognitive function. Teenagers should be getting 8-10 hours of sleep a night and adults should try for 7-9 hours of good quality sleep.

If you think you may be suffering from the effects of sleep deprivation, contact your health care provider to see how they can help you get the sleep you need!