

Are You Getting Too Much Sleep?

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Are You Getting Too Much Sleep?

By Wendy Owen

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Too much sleep? are you kidding? There's no such thing these days is there? With today's fast paced lifestyle there's barely enough time to grab enough sleep let alone too much.

However if you sleep eight hours a night or more and still awake less than refreshed, chances are you're getting too much sleep. What you need is not more sleep it's quality sleep.

Quality sleep allows us to awake feeling refreshed and full of energy, ready to power through the day. It also allows us to sleep less hours, freeing up more time for us to do the things we want.

A lot of people assume that because they're feeling tired all day or have a mid afternoon 'slump' that they need more sleep. Not true!

A lot of people believe because they may have had a couple of late nights, they have to 'catch up' by having extra sleep. Also not true!

Sleeping for too long can damage your circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm is your 24 hour 'clock' controlled by a central part of the brain. This clock tells us when we are sleepy by altering the body temperature by a few degrees. When the body temperature is lowered, we feel sleepy. Conversely when it is raised, we feel awake and alert.

When we sleep for a longer time, our body temperature does not rise as fast. This is why we feel sleepy and sluggish in the mornings. The more tired we feel, the less exercise we do. Inactivity keeps the body temperature down so creating a vicious cycle.

The more sleep we have, the less time we stay awake to create our sleep quality for the following night. Our body does not get exposed to sufficient sunlight to lower our melatonin levels, so we stay sleepy throughout the day.

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The deeper stages of sleep (stages 3 and 4) are the most restorative. This is where the body regenerates. Most of stage 3 and 4 sleep takes place in the first 4 hours of our sleep. The rest of the night is spent in REM (dreaming) sleep and the lighter stages. Stages 3 and 4 are also where the immune system repairs and strengthens itself. It is vital to get this type of quality sleep.

A good start is to make sure we get enough exercise during the day, this gives us a three-fold benefit. It gets us out into the sunlight which reduces our melatonin levels, it raises our body temperature so we feel energized and it tires us in a healthy way so we can have more deep sleep at night.

So when you come home from work feeling worn out and weary, don't veg out in front of the TV. Put on those sneakers and go for a brisk walk around the block instead!

Want to know how to have better sleep? Find out how. Check out <http://www.insomnia-connection.com> your resource for detailed information on sleep and curing stress. The author, Wendy Owen, has had a lifetime interest in general and alternative health as well as being an ex insomniac!

Recognizing A Baby's Sleep Patterns

By Adwina Jackson

It's true, the number one milestone most parents seek look forward to is the day (or night) their newborn starts sleeping through the night.

You don't have to suffer endless night after night without sleep however, even with a newborn.

Baby's actually follow certain sleep patterns, and if you get to know what these patterns are you'll start sleeping more soundly and better the times you do have a chance to get some sleep!

Baby's don't actually sleep at the same intervals adults do. They actually sleep very unsoundly. Their sleep is full of interruptions because their sleep cycle is not yet fully developed, thus they wake more often during the night.

Generally grown adults spend about six hours every night in deep sleep. This is the really restful phase of sleep you require to feel fresh and new in the morning. Usually time permitting another 2 hours are spent in light sleep.

Baby's generally have twice as many light sleep cycles as adults though, and their deep sleep cycles are much shorter than adults.

Baby's also have to LEARN how to fall back asleep, it is not a skill that comes naturally. Whereas adults might zonk out the moment their head hits the pillow, a baby will actually lie there looking for something to soothe them back to sleep.

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Newborns actually sleep a lot, approximately 16 to 18 hours every day, but they don't enjoy this sleep all at the same time. Most babies will sleep in increments of only two to three hour intervals. Sometimes their internal sleep clocks are also confused from being in the womb, and they mistakenly believe that night is day and day is night. This means that they'll spend more of their time sleeping during the day than at night!

Here's the good news, your baby's sleep patterns will eventually change, usually by about the time they are 12 weeks old. They will start sleeping about 14–16 hours per day, and many of those hours will be spent sleeping at night.

What can you do in the meantime to feel more refreshed?

- Sleep when your baby sleeps. No matter what time of day, take a nap whenever your baby does catch some zzz's.
- Open the blinds and keep things bright during the day. This will help change your baby's clock around so they spend more of their time sleeping at night and not during the day.
- Sleep near your baby at night. This will help comfort them and allow them to sleep more easily. There are many co-sleeper products available that allow you to sleep with your baby safely at night. Consider trying one until your baby is about 12 weeks old, when they are old enough to start sleeping on their own.
- You can teach your baby to be a good sleeper with a little time and a little patience, armed with a little bit of knowledge about their sleep patterns!

Adwina Jackson is a wife and mother of a young boy. She's also the editor of Inspiring Parenting, an online source of valuable parenting information. Please visit

for

helpful and free parenting info. Observe your children's health, growth and development by clicking the website.

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