

Counting sheep

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Why does everyone always tell you to have a good night's sleep before a test? Why is sleep so important? It turns out, it is very important, and not just for schoolwork. We have a specific way of sleeping, there are benefits, and there are consequences if you don't.

Our bodies have a specific way of sleeping. According to HealthySleep, the hypothalamus is what is in charge of our sleep. NHIBI (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute) posted on their website that our bodies practically have an inner clock. It controls when you sleep and what time you wake up. Adenosine plays a large role in your sleep.

When you're awake, more and more adenosine is made. Once the level of adenosine in your body is large, then your body begins the transition to sleep. Your body releases chemicals on a daily schedule. When it gets dark outside, your body releases melatonin, a type of hormone. It also signals for your body to prepare for sleep.

The amount of melatonin get larger as the night goes on. Once the sun shines, a hormone called cortisol prepares your body to wake. There are many benefits for sleeping on a regulated schedule. The NHLBI posted that everyone's schedule should depend on their age. For example, an infant should get twelve to sixteen hours of sleep per day.

However, an adult can get by with seven or eight hours. Sleep also largely affects your behavior. One such example is emotional health and a healthy brain function. Sleep helps your brain learn new things. While you sleep, it's building places to store new information. Whether you are learning to play

an instrument, master a sport, or ace a contest, sleep plays a big role in your success.

People who are active really need to sleep, because sleep also affects physical health. Remember that time when you were horribly sore? That's because you have damaged your muscles, and they need to repair themselves. Sleep simply speeds up that process, so you can get back to the field. It also helps with healthy growth and development. When you sleep, your body releases the hormones that help children and teenagers grow. It also helps control your hunger.

If you don't get enough sleep, ghrelin, the hormone that makes you feel hungry, rises to its peak and the amount of leptin, the hormone that makes you feel full, drops. The NHLBI has information on their website about what happens if you don't sleep regularly. Obviously, you will likely feel tired during the daytime. You may fall asleep during a class and not even realize, and then you are missing valuable information. If you have to drive a car, it is more likely you will get into a crash.

A study by The George Institute for Global Health shows exactly that. They studied the driving records from people aged seventeen to twenty-four, whom had recently received their licenses. The subjects were asked to answer one question; how much sleep they got every night. Then, for the next two years, they studied the police records. " Those who reported sleeping six or fewer hours per night had an increased risk for crash compared with those who reported sleeping more than six hours," they said. The weekends were the worst.

There was a 55% larger chance that the people who slept less than six hours would get into a crash. “ For drivers of all ages, estimates in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia report that between 5 percent and 30 percent of crashes are attributed to fatigue,” they noted. The NHLBI also tells us that sleep deficiency also changes your learning, focusing, and reacting. You may not be able make a choice, remember things, dealing with changes, completing tasks, etc. It is untrue and a myth that someone can get through a day with little or no sleep.

There is a truth to how we sleep. There are benefits to getting sleep, while there are consequences if you don't. Sleep is a very in-depth thing and scientists are still trying to find out all it's angles. Do you get enough sleep? Or are you counting sheep?