

## WHY YOU NEED SLEEP

Getting enough sleep-just like eating a healthy diet or exercising regularly-is essential to your overall health and well-being.

Many people don't know that lack of sleep increases their risk of developing chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome and heart disease. Not getting enough sleep can also affect your relationships, productivity and accident risk.

For these reasons, Healthy People 2020-an initiative by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve the health of all Americans-is bringing a renewed focus to the importance of sleep. Healthy People 2020's goals include:

- ❖ Encouraging adults and children to get enough sleep
- ❖ Reducing drowsy driving, which is a dangerous personal and public health hazard
- ❖ Encouraging people with sleep problems to seek evaluation and treatment for their sleep disorders.

You can increase-and improve-your sleep with these tips:

- Set a routine. Try to go to sleep at the same time every night. Relax with meditation, bath or a good book before bedtime.
- Darken your room. Turn off all of your lights and close your shades.
- Curb your habits. Don't consume caffeine, nicotine, or alcohol in the late afternoon or evening.
- Get physical. Exercise most days-but not in the hours just before going to sleep.
- Monitor your meals; don't go to bed hungry or full.

~~~~~7 or 8~~~~~  
Hours

In general, most adults should get seven to eight hours of sleep *each* night.

~~~~~6 hours~~~~~  
or less

However, lifestyle choices and hectic schedules make it difficult for more and more people to get even six hours of sleep a night.

?-When should you seek professional help? See your doctor if you frequently can't fall asleep or stay asleep at night, or if you experience excessive daytime sleepiness, consistent snoring or gasping that interrupts your sleep or unpleasant restless sensations in your legs as you try to fall asleep.