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Wellness Matters

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Your Healthy Body

Protect Your Health: Better Sleep

Sleep is essential for normal, healthy function. However, about 40 million people in the United States suffer from chronic sleep disorders each year, and another 20 million people suffer from occasional sleep problems.

Types and Causes There are more than 100 different sleep and wake disorders. Generally classified into four categories, these include:

- *Trouble falling and staying asleep*, such as insomnia
- *Disturbed sleep*, such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome
- *Excessive sleep*, such as narcolepsy
- *Trouble sticking to a regular sleep schedule*, usually seen in travelers or nighttime workers

Sleep disorders are very common and can result from a number of causes, including stress, illness, diet, or medication. Other causes include genetics, night-shift work, blindness, mental illness, physical illness, and aging.

Diagnosis As with other neurological disorders, an accurate medical history is an essential component of a sleep disorder

diagnosis. People with sleep disorders should keep a daily log of activities and sleep, including both when going to sleep and time actually asleep. Behavior during



sleep, such as snoring or frequent waking, should be reported to the doctor. Also it's important to mention any tobacco, alcohol, or

other drug use to your doctor as these could affect sleep overall.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, more than 18 million Americans suffer from the common sleep disorder *obstructive sleep apnea* (OSA). This causes continual start and stop interruptions to breathing during the night as throat muscles relax and block airways. Talk with your doctor if you suspect this or another sleep disorder.

Treatment Treatment for sleep disorders depends on the cause. If a cause has not been identified for a particular sleep disorder, improving sleep habits is the best treatment.

Follow these tips for a better night's sleep:

- Set a schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Exercise daily, but not within a few hours of going to bed.
- Avoid caffeine, cigarettes, and alcohol within several hours of bedtime; these can cause sleep deprivation or interrupt your sleep cycles.
- Enjoy a relaxing bedtime ritual, like a hot bath or reading.
- Try to wake up to the sun by opening curtains or shades and letting sunlight in or go outside briefly: the sun helps trigger and reset the biological clock, the part of the brain that indicates both sleepiness and wakefulness.
- Before going to bed, make sure the room is not too hot or too cold.

Sleep disorders can create havoc in your every day life and are estimated to cost the American economy \$100 billion in lost productivity due to illnesses and absences. Make better sleep a priority!

Aging Well

One in every five American workers is over age 65, and by the year 2020, one in four will be over age 55 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

As the average lifespan increases, people will likely be working beyond the typical retirement age. This means it is critical to stay healthy throughout your life.

If you are over age 50, consider being screened for the following life-threatening conditions:

- Colorectal cancer
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity

Likewise, if you are over age 60, consider getting your immunizations for the flu, shingles, and pneumonia. Prioritizing your health now will allow you to live a longer, healthier life well into retirement.



Healthy & Delicious

Best Buys for Cost and Nutrition

March is National Nutrition Month! Nutritious food choices can be difficult on a limited budget, but purchasing carefully will help you maximize both nutrition *and* your dollar:

Breads & Grains

- Look for bargains on day-old bread and bakery products.
- Buy regular rice, oatmeal, and grits instead of the instant and flavored types.
- Try whole-grain bread and brown rice to add nutrients and variety to meals.

Vegetables & Salads

- Look for large bags of frozen vegetables; you can cook the amount you need, close the bag tightly, and freeze the rest.
- Foods at salad bars can be costly, but if you only need a small amount, salad bar buys can save money if it reduces waste.
- Buy in-season fruits; they generally cost less.

Meat & Poultry

- Look for specials at the meat counter; large cuts on sale means big savings.
- Buy chuck or bottom round roast instead of sirloin; they have less fat and cost less (be sure to cover and cook longer for tenderness).
- Substitute lower-cost, high-nutrient dry beans in place of meats, poultry, or fish.

CRITICAL HEALTH CHECKS FOR WORKERS OVER 50



GET SCREENED FOR:

- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- High cholesterol



GET IMMUNIZED FOR:

- Influenza
- Pneumonia



YOU'RE AT RISK IF YOU:

- Smoke
- Binge drink
- Overeat
- Have high blood pressure