

# Safety Circular

## Why Do We Need Sleep?

If you've stayed awake all night by choice, out of necessity, or in spite of your efforts to sleep— you know just how critical sleep is to your wellbeing. Everyone needs sleep, but about one in three American adults don't get enough of it.

The consequences of sleep deprivation are serious, so it's worth learning why sleep matters, how it works, and how to give yourself the best chance of getting a good night's sleep.

### Why Getting Enough Sleep Is Important

Sleep is an essential function that allows your body and mind to recharge, leaving you refreshed and alert when you wake up. Healthy sleep also helps the body remain healthy and ward off diseases. Without enough sleep, the brain cannot function properly, impairing your abilities to concentrate, think clearly, and process memories.

**Sleep serves a variety of importance physical and psychological functions, including:**

- Learning and memory consolidation
- Emotional regulation
- Judgement and decision making
- Problem Solving
- Energy Conservation
- Growth and Healing
- Immunity
- Adults require 7 hours a night or more of sleep

### Symptoms of Sleep Deprivation



### Stages of Sleep:

- Stage N1: This is the lightest stage of sleep and it only last a few minutes.
- Stage N2: Healthy adults usually spend about half of the night in N2 sleep.
- Stage N3: N3 sleep, also called “slow wave sleep,” helps a person wake up feeling refreshed.
- REM Sleep: As it's name suggests, people's eyes intermittently move rapidly during this sleep stage. Most vivid dreaming takes place during REM sleep.

Healthy individuals cycle through all four stages of sleep multiple times a night. Regular sleep disruptions, as well as sleep disorders that affect sleep architecture like sleep apnea, can have serious consequence for physical health and mental health.

# The Effect of a Lack of Sleep

## Did you know?

Not getting the amount of sleep your body needs can have serious consequences. Just one sleepless night can make it harder for you to focus and think clearly, and you might feel tired or sluggish during the day.

You're more likely to feel irritable and to exercise poor judgement when you haven't had enough sleep. And sleep deprivation significantly elevates your risk of making a mistake at work or having a car accident.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T SLEEP



## Long-term sleep deprivation carries all these risks and more:

- Suppress your immune system, increasing your susceptibility to sickness and infection
- Increase your risk of developing heart problems, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure
- Interfere with your metabolism and elevate your risk for obesity
- Cause your relationships to suffer at work and at home
- Lead to depression and anxiety
- The effects of sleep debt compound quickly, so the sooner you can address sleep difficulties, the better

## How to Always Get a Good Night's Sleep:

- Get at least 20 minutes of exposure to natural light in the morning
- Commit to a regular sleep schedule
- Adopt a relaxing bedtime routine
- Make sure your bedroom environment is cool, dark, quite and comfortable
- Avoid electronics with a screen an hour before bed
- Exercise regularly and early in the day. Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine in the hours before bed

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The Safety Circular, a publication of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Risk Management Department, is published monthly in an effort to promote and enhance risk management awareness on issues relating to TDCJ employees. Comments, suggestions and safety related items are welcome.

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