**Sleep Facts**

Adults should sleep 7 or more hours per night on a regular basis to promote optimal health. Research provides strong evidence that you may be harming your health by restricting your sleep. Getting less than 7 hours of sleep on a regular basis increases your risk of several adverse health outcomes.

*Health problems linked to insufficient sleep include:*

- Weight gain and obesity
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Depression
- Impaired immune system
- Increased risk of death

Also, sleeping less than 7 hours per night also can impair your performance. You have an increased risk of errors and accidents when you don’t get enough sleep each night.

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**Better Sleep Means Better Health**

Sleep is one of our most basic human needs. It’s safe to say that sleep is as necessary as food and water, if we don’t get enough sleep there are serious health consequences. Sleep deprivation can cause damage to your body in the short term. Over time, it can lead to chronic health problems and negatively impact your quality of life.
Quick Sleep Tips

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Set a bedtime that is early enough to get at least 7 hours of sleep.
- Avoid consuming caffeine in the late afternoon or evening.
- Avoid consuming alcohol before bedtime.
- Turn off all your electronics.
- Don’t eat a large meal before bedtime.
- If hungry at night, eat a light, healthy snack.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing.
- Invest in a comfortable mattress, pillow and bedding.
- Establish relaxing bedtime rituals.

What Causes Sleep Problems?

Psychologists and other scientists who study the causes of sleep disorders have shown that such problems can directly or indirectly be tied to abnormalities in the following systems:

Physiological systems
- Brain and nervous system
- Cardiovascular system
- Metabolic functions
- Immune system

Furthermore, unhealthy conditions, disorders and diseases can also cause sleep problems, including:
- Pathological sleepiness, insomnia and accidents
- Hypertension and elevated cardiovascular risks (MI, stroke)
- Emotional disorders (depression, bipolar disorder)
- Obesity; metabolic syndrome and diabetes
- Alcohol and drug abuse

Groups that are at particular risk for sleep deprivation include night shift workers, physicians, truck drivers, parents and teenagers.