



Sweet Dreams

If you've heard it once, as executives that are mostly sleep deprived, you've heard it dozens of time. Proper amounts of sleep significantly improve your quality of life. Although most executives generally clock in about six hours a night, the Mayo Clinic recommends adults and seniors snooze between seven and eight hours a night.

A good night's rest provides many health benefits. You've heard that sleep heals – which is a key function of rest. At a cellular level, sleep enables your body to produce extra protein molecules which help mend daily damage caused by stress, pollutants, infection, and even sun exposure. While sleeping, your body begins to relax, which reduces stress and ultimately inflammation levels. This repair work keeps your heart healthy as well as helps lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. For people struggling with weight issues, sleep helps regulate hormones that affect and control appetite. Plus, an added bonus of sleep is to help your brain work more effectively. Snoozing facilitates the organizing and correlating of memories allowing you to process the new knowledge you gained during the day – as well as improve memory and increase understanding.

Sadly, many busy executives aren't getting enough sleep. Studies show that on average, people are sleeping 20 percent less than they did 100 years ago. The bulk of us are losing sleep over stress, and another large percentage of adults suffer from insomnia with women one and a half to two times more likely to experience insomnia – many times due to hormonal shifts. And it isn't just insomnia that causes problems– more than 100 different types of sleeping and waking problems have been identified. To help manage solutions, experts generally group sleeping disorders into four main categories:

- Insomnia-or trouble falling and staying asleep
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Sleep rhythm challenges caused by difficulty keeping regular sleep schedules
- Sleep-disruptive behaviors – like sleep apnea

One of the more common sleep disrupters found in adults is sleep apnea. Sleep apnea may be difficult to identify, but can cause severe health impacts. You may have sleep apnea if you suffer from loud snoring or if you



stop breathing during sleep. Many people don't think of snoring as a sign of something potentially serious, and not everyone who has sleep apnea snores. However, you may also experience waking up with shortness of breath, or wake up to a headache or sore throat, dry mouth and later feel excessively sleepy and even "foggy" during the day.

Although you can manage skipping sleep in the short run, without a good night's sleep, people will begin to suffer from everything from physical illness, depression, weight gain, overuse of alcohol or other drugs, or a dependence on sleep aids. Today, about 10 million people are using prescription sleep aids to deal with insomnia.

If you are feeling chronically fatigued, irritable or excessively fatigued, make an appointment with your doctor at Executive MD. We can help diagnose a potential sleep disorder and determine the best solution to improve your snooze time and ultimately health.

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