

Are You Getting Enough Sleep? Why Women Struggle with Sleep Problems

March 18 2009

Good sleep equals good health, says Raul Noriega, manager of the Comprehensive Epilepsy and Sleep Disorders Center at Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine. Yet more than half of women report problems with insomnia. According to the National Sleep Foundation, “women’s lack of sleep affects nearly every aspect of their time-pressed lives, leaving them late for work, stressed out, tired and with little time for friends.” What’s going on? There are several factors, Noriega says, and all relate to poor sleep hygiene.

1. Jolt of java

[Coffee](#) consumption has jumped dramatically, Noriega says. It’s like a [vicious cycle](#). People drink coffee at night and stay up late watching TV or surfing the Internet. Then they need a jolt at 6 a.m. to get started for the day. Eventually, that takes a toll on the body. Remember, caffeine is a stimulant, so refrain from drinking it at least six hours before bed.

2. Stressed out

Women tend to worry, Noriega says. “Once your head hits the pillow, your only duty is to [sleep](#),” he says. But some women find it hard to relax. “They start thinking about what they forgot to do, about the kids, work deadlines, unpaid bills, the stock market.”

3. Stay cool

Body temperature lowers about one degree during sleep. Working out too close to bedtime is counterproductive—it will take three hours to cool down enough for sleep to take place, Noriega explains. And, next

time you're tempted to check the clock and calculate how many hours of sleep you have left—don't. Even a small amount of exertion consumes energy, which raises the body's temperature, further delaying sleep.

4. The bottom line

Developing good [sleep hygiene](#) can help you avoid relying on medication, Noriega says. For example, be sure to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. A bedtime ritual also can help. Thirty minutes before bed turn off [loud music](#), make the atmosphere calm, dim the lights, take a warm (not hot) shower. Then, read in bed for a maximum of 15 minutes, turn off the lights, close your eyes and relax.

Provided by Baylor Health Care System

Citation: Are You Getting Enough Sleep? Why Women Struggle with Sleep Problems (2009, March 18) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-03-women-struggle-problems.html>

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