

# wellnessNEWS

Ideas to help you *LIVE WELL* from the ENCANA WELLNESS CENTRE

Sleep is often the first thing to be ignored when deadlines and responsibilities build up. But sleep is a very important component to health and productivity. Here are some suggestions to improve your sleep habits...

## Tips for a better night's sleep

By Jon Fleming, MD (Source: www.bodyandhealth.canada.com)

**\* Go to bed and get up at the same time each morning, including weekends**

If you can maintain a schedule for several weeks, you will probably find yourself falling asleep faster and feeling more refreshed.

**\* Avoid alcohol**

For every drink you have, give your body at least an hour to process it before trying to fall asleep.

**\* Avoid caffeine in the afternoon**

If you are having trouble sleeping, try avoiding all afternoon and evening caffeine

**\* Reduce or eliminate nicotine use**

Do not smoke within four hours of your bedtime. The nicotine in cigarettes is a stimulant that will keep you awake.

**\* Exercise regularly**

Daily exercise will improve your chances of falling asleep quickly and sleeping deeply. Try to exercise early in the day and never within three hours of bedtime.

**\* Make a bedtime ritual**

Create a nightly ritual to signal that it is time to sleep. Start the ritual about 30 minutes before you lie down to help release stressful thoughts and be ready to sleep when you lie down.

**\* Adjust your sleep environment**

Your environment should be comfortably warm (or cool), with minimal levels of light and noise.

\*Naps can be a great way to catch up on lost sleep. After taking naps, people function better and do certain cognitive tasks quicker. However, napping longer than an hour or after 3 p.m. may make it more difficult for you to fall asleep at night.

(Source: www.longevity.about.com)

\*Want to learn more about sleep? Contact the Canadian Sleep Institute in Calgary. Tel: 403.254.6400

## What is a typical night's sleep?

(Source: www.css.to)

Healthy, young adults will fall asleep in 10-20 minutes after "lights out". Thereafter, the sleeper will cycle through five different stages of sleep in the course of the night.

Stage 1: As you fall asleep, your thoughts begin to wander and your awareness of the outside world is reduced.

Stage 2: As much as 50-60% of the night is spent in this stage, a relatively light stage of sleep (i.e., easy to wake from sleep).

Stages 3 and 4: These occur predominately in the first half of the night, and are referred to as deep sleep since it requires a more meaningful or intense stimulus to wake the sleeper (e.g., baby's cry or your own name).

Together, stages one through four, are referred to as non-REM sleep.

Stage 5: REM sleep (or rapid eye-movement sleep) will occur approximately every 90 minutes throughout the night. You can thus expect to experience four to five REM sleep episodes per night. The first REM period is typically very brief, lasting less than 10 minutes, while the final episode may continue for more than an hour.

## Health Benefits of a Good Night's Sleep

From Mark Stibich, Ph.D.

(Source: www.longevity.about.com)

- ✿ Keeps your heart healthy
- ✿ Reduces stress
- ✿ Makes you more alert
- ✿ Bolsters your memory
- ✿ May help you lose weight
- ✿ Reduces your risk for depression
- ✿ Helps the body make repairs