

How Much Sleep Do You Need?

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The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) conducted a world-class study that took over two years of research to complete. The NSF updated their guidelines on how much sleep you really need at each age:

- **Newborns (0-3 months):** 14-17 hours each day
- **Infants (4-11 months):** 12-15 hours
- **Toddlers (1-2 years):** 11-14 hours
- **Preschoolers (3-5):** 10-13 hours
- **School-age children (6-13):** 9-11 hours
- **Teenagers (14-17):** 8-10 hours
- **Younger adults (18-25):** 7-9 hours
- **Adults (26-64):** 7-9 hours
- **Older adults (65+):** 7-8 hours

Improving Sleep Satisfaction Can Increase Your Energy Level

Sleep satisfaction is a subjective evaluation of how satisfied you feel with your sleep. It can be influenced by factors in the bedroom environment like noise, light, and temperature. When your sleep satisfaction, quantity (hours slept), or quality (caliber of sleep) improves, your energy levels can improve as well.

Your body restores many functions during high-quality sleep, like a strong immune system, steady hormone levels, temperature regulation, and a good appetite. You need to maintain these functions through quality sleep to have the energy to operate at your full potential! Not only does sleep restore energy, but poor sleep quality slows you down. Poor sleep quality is also linked to obesity and weight gain. Not getting enough sleep is connected to eating more calories without an increase in activity level.

How Sleep Affects Your Immunity

Sleep plays an important role when it comes to your health. In fact, skimping on it could negatively affect your immune system, making you more susceptible to a bad cold or the flu. Cytokines are a type of protein that targets infection and inflammation, efficiently creating an immune response. Without adequate sleep, your body makes fewer cytokines, which are produced and released during sleep.

Getting the recommended hours of sleep per night will help keep your immune system in fighting shape. It will also protect you from other health issues like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. If you can't get the recommended hours of sleep, taking naps that are 30 minutes or less has been shown to decrease stress and offset the adverse effects that sleep deprivation has on the immune system. Keep in mind that even if you do get sick with a cold or the flu, you'll be able to bounce back faster if your body is well-rested!

Fun and Helpful Sleep Resources

Work on getting your recommended hours of sleep by competing in a friendly competition with others, or track it yourself using the [WellSteps](#) "Sweet Dreams" Challenge. Other helpful tools to use are sleep apps that aim to help you fall asleep, stay asleep, and feel energized throughout the day. Try downloading [Sleepio](#), for example, which is a 6-week online program designed by sleep experts and based on cognitive and behavioral techniques. Sleepio is based on 30 years of clinical and research experience and would typically cost you \$400 per year. However, Healthy Lifestyles participants can access it for free! Check it out and get working on your personalized sleep improvement plan this year.