



WELLNESS BY *Blair*

SLEEP BETTER



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HELLO SWEET SLEEP

Sleep is one of the most important topics that I talk about as a naturoapth. Having adequate sleep can allow us to have boundless energy, our food to be digested properly, our skin to be clear and also to concentrate at full capacity.

More often than not, in times of stress, work deadlines or uni exams we are compromising on our sleep.

Normal sleep duration recommendation for a healthy individual, according to National Sleep Foundation's Report, is said to be between

7-9 hours for young adults.

7-8 hours for older adults

8- 10 hours for teens

12-15 hours for infants

14-17 hours for newborns.

However, you should note that the ideal sleep range may vary from one person to another. Sleep is a natural physiological process that reinvigorates our body, allows it to heal, and grow. Sleep is generally accompanied by a change in the state of the eyes as well as body posture, and it is very vital to proper body functioning most importantly, the brain. It is very important we priorities sleep, and make sure we are getting a resful sleep as often as we can, to let our bodies be vital.

SLEEP CYCLES AND STAGES

Sleep is usually accompanied by certain brain activities. There are five sleep stages stages 1-4 (Non-REM Stages) and the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) stage. Typically, the body cycles repeatedly through the Non-REM stages about 4-5 times and then the REM phase during sleep with each cycle lasting for about 80-110 minutes. The body predominantly spends 50% sleep time in stage 2 and 20% in the REM stage while other stages account for the remaining 30%. However, infants are said to spend 50% of the sleep time in the REM phase.

It is essential to have a proper understanding of the sleep cycle because it can help us have the duration and quality of sleep we desire.

Below is a brief description of the five phases of sleep:

An every cycle- takes between 90-110minutes.

Stages 1-4 are NREM (Non Rapid Eye Movement)

Stage 1- Drowsiness occurs, slow eye rolling movements. Overall loss of awareness.

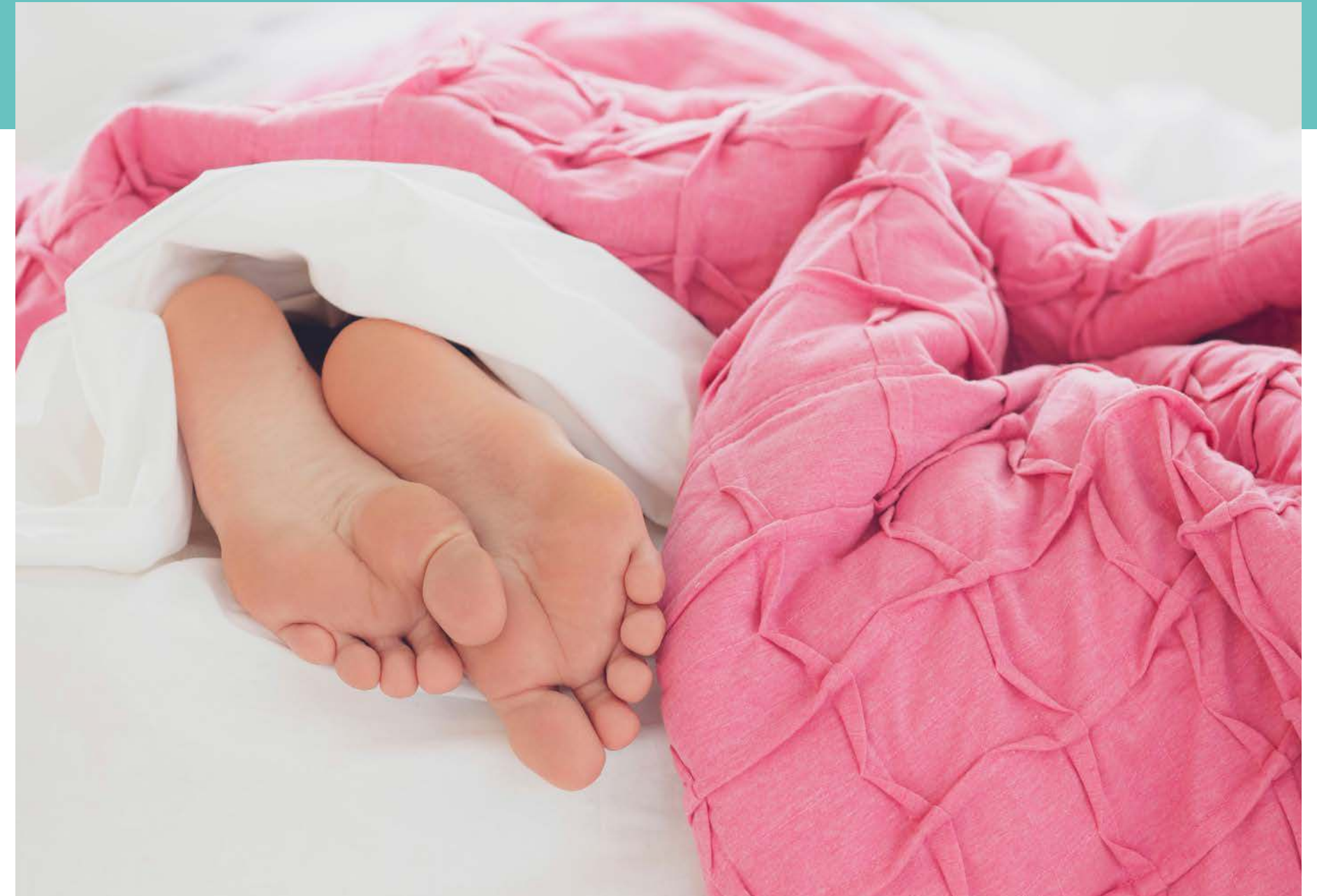
Stage 2- Longer periods than stage 1, 40-60 percent of sleep in this stage. High voltage slow waves can appear in EEG

Stage 3- 5-15 percent of sleep in this stage, however children much longer in this stage.

Stage 4- Deepest stage of sleep.

REM

Stage 5- Muscles cannot move, Most people say when awakened report dreaming.



SLEEP DISORDERS

For you to understand the cause of Sleep Disorder, we must first answer the question "What drives sleep?" You feel drowsy as night approaches and alert in the daytime. Why? An internal biological clock – the circadian rhythm – is responsible for this. This internal clock is regulated by hormones – stress hormone cortisol and sleep hormone melatonin – secreted by the brain to transmit the sleep and wake signals to the whole body.

Secondly, we have the sleep/wake homeostatic drive which determines how long and sound you sleep. For example, when you stay awake then your usual awake time during the day, you tend to sleep deeper and longer – the homeostatic drive mechanism is responsible for this.

However, when these two complimentary processes are disrupted, insomnia and other sleep disorders emanate. Sleep disorder is the disruption of the natural sleep pattern which is driven by the sleep/wake homeostasis and the circadian rhythm. Common sleep disorders usually experienced includes:

+

INSOMNIA

+

+

JET LAG

+

+

OBSTRUCTIVE
SLEEP APNEA
(OSA)

+

+

RESTLESS
LEGS
SYNDROME
(RLS)

+

SLEEP DISORDERS

+ INSOMNIA

This is the feeling of not having enough sleep and may result in lower memory and mental performance while awake. According to the publication Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders by the America Psychiatric Association, one is considered to be suffering from insomnia under the following criteria:

- + Dissatisfaction with the quality and length of sleep due to difficulties initiating sleep, maintaining sleep or returning to sleep after waking up too early in the morning.
- + The sleep disturbance results in anxiety and depression, negative social behaviours, bad mood or retarded mental performance which significantly affect your day-to-day activities.
- + The difficulty occurs at least three times within a week and persists for at least three months
- + You could not sleep despite ample opportunities available to you for sleep
- + The inability to get good sleep occurs exclusively of other diagnosed sleep disorders
- + The sleep difficulty is exclusive to the influence of substances such as alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and other stimulants.



+ JET LAG

When you travel across time zones, you are likely to experience jet-lag. This occurs when the body's 'internal clock' is out of sync with the circadian rhythm which is influenced by exposure to sunlight. The sleep-wake pattern regulated by circadian rhythm becomes disrupted when you travel across time zones making you feel sleepy right in the middle of the day while you stay awake all night: jet lag results in dizziness, tiredness, irritability and undue stress. Jet lag symptoms are usually more severe when you travel Eastward than travelling Westward.



OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA (OSA)

This also known as simply 'Sleep Apnea' and it is a condition in which there is a partial blockage of the respiratory tract denying you a sound and restorative sleep. Someone with sleep apnea tends to snore, wake up intermittently during sleep and will have an overall feeling of not having enough sleep after getting out of bed. Sleep apnea is predominant among people with a small jaw, the obese and those who take alcohol before bedtime.

SLEEP DISORDERS



RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME (RLS)

a nervous system disorder that causes an uncomfortable sensation and irresistible urge to move the leg for relief usually while lying down or sitting down. It's classified as a sleep disorder because it causes daytime sleepiness and tiredness that may affect mental concentration and other cognitive abilities. It should, however, be noted that more often than not, RLS is only a signal to other fundamental health issues. So, you should seek medical attention when you experience the RLS symptoms. Good sleep practices can also help minimise the resulting consequences.

All sleep disorders are considered risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, type II diabetes, depression and even obesity.

HOW TO SLEEP BETTER

FOOD AND HERBS

NATURAL REMEDIES



FOODS AND
HERBS



LIFESTYLE
CHANGES



BEDROOM
ENVIRONMENT



Research has shown that Foods rich in tryptophan – an amino acid – tends to improve your quality of sleep as well as general mental performance. When you increase intake of foods rich in tryptophan – such as eggs, poultry, elk, shrimp, crab and cheese among others – there is a corresponding increase in the levels of Serotonin and Melatonin available in the body.



SEROTONIN

Serotonin – a neurotransmitter chemical which carries signals – that drives sleep – from the brain to the neurons and then the nerve endings. So, serotonin plays a crucial role in your sleep drive and impacts your mood and cognitive abilities. Serotonin helps the memory function better and could also reduce depression and anxiety risks. Most Antidepressants work by stimulating serotonin release in the body.



MELATONIN

Melatonin is a hormone which regulates the sleep-wake cycle. It serves as an internal clock that put the body in and out of sleep mode. At night time, it causes body temperature to drop and drowsiness – making you feel sleepy. Foods rich in melatonin include tomatoes, strawberries and grapes. Melatonin is also available as food supplements – boosting the immune system and enhancing nutrients metabolism.

FOOD AND HERBS

+ MAGNESIUM

For better sleep, you can also increase your magnesium intake from sources such as leafy vegetables, pumpkin seeds, wheat germ and almonds. Magnesium helps your brain and body as a whole to relax. It forms a complex with gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) receptors a nerve-relaxing neurotransmitter. However, consult your doctor before taking magnesium supplements as it may interact with other medications.

+ GREEN TEA

Certain herbs such as green tea can also help you sleep better. Green tea contains L-theanine an amino acid which can reduce anxiety, slow down heart rate and stimulates the release of relaxing hormones. It might be best to have this before lunch though, as some people say that it can still interrupt their sleeping pattern.

+ CHAMOMILE

Chamomile is an herb that comes from the daisy-like flowers of the Asteraceae plant family.

Chamomile tea is made from dried flowers and also hot water. Adding chamomile tea to your regime if you are having trouble sleeping can be a great addition. It has said to work with sleep by, Apigenin binds to specific receptors in your brain that may decrease anxiety and initiate sleep.



LIFESTYLE CHANGES

+ SLEEP-WAKE TIME CONSISTENCY

Wet your body's internal clock by sleeping and waking up the same time every day and try not to vary this your chosen time more than a difference of an hour. Your body adjust to this internal clock and could react if you do not stick with it you might have the same feeling as someone with a jet-lag sleep disorder.

+ REDUCE DEPRESSANTS AND ALCOHOL INTAKE

caffeine tends to speed up heart pace, and it's advisable you avoid taking it within 6 hours from your sleep time. Alcohol and smoking suppress the REM and the Deep Sleep Phase, resulting in a longer light sleep from which you can be easily awoken.



+ SPEND MORE TIME OUTDOOR

A study published in Current Biology by Kenneth Wright shows that longer exposure to natural light has the tendency to help you sleep better at night keeps the biological clock in synchronization with the nature's day-time cycle. This resonance between the body's clock and that of nature affords you a better night sleep. In the study, Wright and his team observed five volunteers who camped for a week in Colorado Rockies in comparison to when they were at home the results showed that they slept 2.5 hours earlier than what is observed at home and they also woke up earlier just before sunrise. It's advisable you spend your lunchtime outdoor, walk your dog in the day and not in the evening or try as much as possible to have your house well littered with natural light in the daytime.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

+ YOGA

It helps you alleviating stress, boosts mental and physical alertness giving you an overall improved sleep quality. Select styles involving slow and controlled movements as opposed to vigorous physical movement restorative and yin yoga are great options.



+ EXERCISE REGULARLY

Exercise has a positive impact on overall health. It was established in a journal titled sleep that people who exercise for 150 minutes per week for six months or at least 20 minutes per day with occasional vigorous aerobic exercise are less predisposed to insomnia, anxiety and depression. Exercise keeps the circadian rhythm the internal clock in check to ensure quality sleep. Exercise causes a drop in body temperature known to be associated with sleep drive. So, it is important you exercise early in the morning because it takes your body about 6 hours for its temperature to drop after exercise.

BEDROOM ENVIRONMENT

+ SMELL

Certain smell such as lavender can help you have a better sleep. So, you can fill up your bedside fragrant diffuser with lavender oil it slows down your heart rate and decreases blood pressure. Lavender scents potentially put you in a more relaxed state for a deep-long sleep.

+ LIGHTS

Blue lights such as those from florescent bulbs, LEDs, cellphone's and PC's screens should be avoided- it hinders melatonin hormone secretion. Especially an hour bed time.

+ NOISE

Try to keep down surrounding noise to the minimum. Noise tends to increase heart rate and the blood pressure making sleep difficult.



QUICK TIPS

- + Avoid the intake of caffeine, nicotine and alcohol
- + You can have a quick night time snack- maybe a whole wheat cracker with cheese or a spoonful of peanut butter with banana
- + Ensure good exposure to natural light during daytime
- + Stay active by exercising regularly, earlier in the day
- + Ensure your bedroom temperature is at the right temperature
- + Use a good mattress and support your head with a pillow



FOR BETTER SLEEP

- + Use breathable line bedspread to reduce body odour, sweat and ultimately, skin irritation
- + Avoid bright screen lights a few hours before bedtime
- + Keep your bedroom cool and dark
- + Take a shower before going to bed
- + Don't get in bed unless you are feeling sleepy
- + Don't stay in bed if you're unable to fall asleep within 20 minutes



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