

Get Some Sleep!

Last night I slept nine hours. There, I said it. And tonight, if possible, I'll sleep nine more! I used to apologize for getting so many zzzz's. No more. Turns out that's how much sleep I really need. When I try to get by on less, I feel lousy, am less productive and cranky!

Turns out, there's no reason to feel guilty about getting a good night's sleep. In fact, medical research has proven a lack of sleep can be deadly! When people get less than 6 or 7 hours of sleep each night...their risk for developing a variety of diseases increases. Studies prove it. If laboratory rats are regularly deprived of sleep, they live only 5 weeks of their 2 to 3 year life expectancy.

You may recall former President Clinton's health scare during his second term. The President had two stents placed due to a couple of blocked coronary arteries. After his health scare, Mr. Clinton told reporters he vowed to sleep more. The former president had long been known for his ability to perform on four to five hour's sleep. Under doctor's orders, he began turning out the lights a little earlier, getting at least 7 hours of shut-eye.

Need another reason to snuggle under the comforter a while longer? How 'bout 9 more? In addition to keeping your heart healthy, here are several more health benefits from the "Archives of Internal Medicine:"

1. Sleep May Prevent Cancer--Late shift workers are at higher risk for breast and colon cancer. It's believed light exposure at night reduces melatonin levels, a hormone that both makes us sleepy and may protect against cancer.
2. Sleep Reduces Stress--When your body is sleep deficient, it goes into a state of stress--increasing blood pressure and the production of stress hormones.
3. Sleep Reduces Inflammation--Stress hormones raise the level of inflammation in your body, creating the risk for a variety of disease conditions.
4. Sleep Makes You More Alert--Duh!
5. Sleep Bolsters Your Memory--Dream time and deep sleep are important for the brain to make memories and links.
6. Sleep May Help You Lose Weight--It's believed lack of sleep impacts the balance of hormones in the body that affect appetite.
7. Naps Make You Smarter--Napping improves memory, cognitive function and mood.
8. Sleep May Reduce Your Risk for Depression--Sleep impacts the brain's mood-elevating chemical, serotonin.
9. Sleep Helps the Body Make Repairs--Sleep is a time for your body to repair damage caused by stress, ultra-violet rays and other harmful exposures.

...not to mention--a good night's sleep just makes you feel better.

Sweet dreams!