You are likely aware that sleep is essential for overall health. But did you know that it also plays a role in managing your heart health? In honor of National Sleep Awareness Month and World Sleep Day this March 17, we’re sharing resources to help you sleep and feel better.

**SLEEP & HEART DISEASE**

A lack of sleep can lead to several problems, including: ¹

- Increased blood pressure
- A buildup of fat in the arteries, making it harder for blood to move throughout your body
- Chronic inflammation or swelling, which can lead to many other diseases
- Increased risk of heart failure
- 20% increased risk of heart attack
- Arrhythmia, or irregular heartbeats

**TIPS FOR GOOD SLEEP**

Experts agree that most adults need around 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Here are some tips to help you reach that goal:²

- Have a regular sleep routine and stick to it. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day. It’s tempting to sleep in on the weekends, but having a regular schedule is

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Visit our “MHI Sleep Resource page” [HERE](#) to learn more about sleep and heart health.

**REFERENCES**

To view the sources referenced in this newsletter, please click [HERE](#)
Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and big meals close to bedtime
Make sure your bedroom is cool, dark, and quiet
Turn off your TV, phone, and computer at least 30 minutes before going to sleep
Stay active throughout the day and eat a healthy diet
Relax before bedtime with a warm bath or book

If you have hard time falling asleep for at least 20 minutes, get out of bed and walk around. Or try a quiet activity. Just make sure to keep the lights dim and stay off your phone while your body works to get sleepy.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP?

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a lack of sleep also raises the risk of kidney disease, obesity, diabetes, depression, and stroke. Your mood, reaction time, and productivity will likely get worse with less sleep. Nearly 30% of adults in the U.S. do not get enough sleep. It important to figure out what is causing any sleep problems and fix them.4

Sleep Disorders
Although most causes of insomnia, or trouble sleeping, happen because of poor sleep habits, some people suffer from more complex sleep disorders. According to the National Sleep Foundation, between 10% - 30% of adults struggle with chronic insomnia.

Sleep Apnea
One in five adult Americans suffer from sleep apnea. Sleep apnea occurs when a person stops breathing for short periods of time while sleeping. This pause stops the body from getting enough oxygen. People who experience sleep apnea often snore or gasp loudly while sleeping. They also often feel very tired throughout the day. Men are at a higher risk of having sleep apnea, as are people who are overweight. Sleep apnea makes it hard to get a good night’s rest. This lack of good sleep is linked to high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, stroke, and heart failure.5

Narcolepsy
Affecting up to 200,000 Americans, narcolepsy is a rare, but often under-diagnosed, neurological condition. It affects a person’s ability to control being awake and asleep. People who have narcolepsy are often sleepy during the day and may even fall asleep without warning. They may also have sudden muscle weakness or sleep paralysis. Like sleep apnea, narcolepsy is linked to higher rates of heart conditions including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, heart attack, and heart failure. People living with narcolepsy also have an increased

In 2022, the American Heart Association added sleep as one of “Life’s Essential 8.” These activities can maintain or even improve your heart health. Sleep was added because it helps the body heal, reduces the risk of chronic disease, builds the immune system, and improves mood, energy, and how the brain works.3

Sleep is just one part of Life’s Essential 8, which include:
1. Eat Better
2. Be More Active
3. Quit Tobacco
4. Get Healthy Sleep
5. Manage Weight
6. Control Cholesterol
7. Manage Blood Sugar
8. Manage Blood Pressure
Because people with these sleep disorders have a higher risk of heart disease, it's most helpful to discuss your risks with a doctor and take steps to ensure a good night’s rest.

Thank you to the following partner for helping us bring awareness to this important topic.

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