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How Important is Sleep?



Sleep is often not taken too seriously by many people. Even half the people who know they have a real sleeping disorder, like sleep apnea, still refuse to help their selves. Sleeping isn't something that only determines whether you are tired or alert. To put it simply, sleep can save your life. Sleep is needed so everything in your body and mind can work correctly. Without it, or the continuous lack of, you may be flirting with death.

If you can sleep well, be thankful you can. 50-70 million people in the U.S. suffer from insomnia (can't fall asleep well or stay asleep for long). To them, sleep is a luxury, while to others, it is something taken for granted or abused.

So just how important is sleep? Let us go over the long-term effects of not getting the proper sleep.

The Brain: The first signs you may be aware of when getting less than 6 hours of sleep is you feel tired, forgetful, irritable, and just not on the top of your game. Yet, in long term, it shows to everyone around you; bad job performance, mood swings, depression, and you turn into that person that no one really wants to be around. There was a study done on this by the Mental Health Foundation, they discovered people that didn't get enough sleep were 4x's as likely to suffer from lack of concentration, have relationship problems, and 3x's more likely to be depressed, and 2.6x's more likely to commit suicide. The bottom line is brain function is critical. Without proper sleep, the brain can't regenerate properly. Then with time, it will literally take the best of you in the end.

The Heart: The University of Warwick did a study and found that getting less than 6 hours of sleep on a continuous basis makes you 48% more likely to die of heart disease and 15% more likely in developing a stroke. Professor Cappuccio, co-author of the study, said "the trend for late nights and early mornings is like a ticking time bomb for your health". If you are over 65, you are 83% more likely to have high blood pressure which increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Weight: Many studies have been done with the relation to weight because let us be honest, many people are more concerned with their weight than their sleep! The good news is that lack of sleep does increase your chances of obesity. The bad news is if you do not believe sleep is all that important, but your weight is, then you are not helping your weight problem by not getting the proper sleep (7-9 hours). The reasoning for weight gain is the longer you are awake the hungrier you will become. Your body needs energy to keep going and if you are staying up long hours, the more energy it will require.

Life Length: Again, many studies have been completed on the relation to longevity to sleep. Professor Kevin Morgan from Loughborough University's sleep research team says that "those that sleep 7-9 hours live longer than those who sleep shorter or even longer". You are 12% more likely to die over a 25-year period if you are not getting enough or too much sleep.

Immune System: Another interesting correlation Professor Morgan found was that when you are sleep deprived your immune system is weaker. He first discovered this by testing rats then tested humans who had work shifts at night (bad sleeping habits are more common in night workers). The study showed you are more likely to get sick if you do not get enough sleep.

In final, sleep can save your life and others. Why others? According to the CDC, 1 in every 25 adults report that they fall asleep at the wheel at least once a month which results in an estimated 6,000 fatal crashes a year. If you have trouble sleeping, there are many natural tips you can try. If you are someone who doesn't take sleep seriously, you may want to reconsider.



Kristi



Damian



Toni



Michael

Recipe of the Month:

Ravioli with Arugula & Pecorino

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook ravioli until tender, 7-9 minutes or according to package directions.
2. Meanwhile, mash garlic and salt into paste with the side of a chef's knife or back of a spoon. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic paste and shallots and cook, stirring often, until just starting to brown, 2-3 minutes. Stir in vinegar, mustard and pepper; remove from heat.
3. Drain the ravioli well. Place in a large bowl and toss with arugula and the dressing. Serve sprinkled with cheese.



Ingredients

- 1 pound fresh or frozen cheese ravioli, preferably whole-wheat
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large shallots, sliced
- 3 tbsp red-wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 6 cups arugula
- ½ cup shaved Pecorino Romano or Parmesan cheese

Active: 20min Ready in: 20min

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