

## **Sleep: Want It, Need It, Get It**

**Want It:** Waking in the morning feeling refreshed, renewed and invigorated is a good indicator of an adequate quality and quantity of sleep. For some people, however, adequate sleep is seldom achieved.

**Need It:** Sleep is a fundamental component of good health across the lifespan. It is both restorative and protective. Individuals who do not have adequate sleep are more likely to experience attention and memory difficulties, daytime sleepiness, lack of energy, and are at higher risk of falling or having a traffic accident.

Inadequate sleep is associated with medical conditions, including heart and lung diseases, high blood pressure, depression, stroke, diabetes, and obesity. Not getting enough sleep can lower metabolic function, compromise immunity, be associated with cancer, increase sensitivity to pain and increase mortality.

**Get It:** Nonstop lifestyles, stress, lack of understanding about the health benefits of adequate sleep, and the presence of sleep-related problems are just a few of the reasons children and adults may fail to achieve adequate sleep.

Achieving adequate sleep may result from simple changes in routine, environment, diet and other factors. Sleep disorders are common, and some are serious, but most can be treated.

### **How Much Sleep Is Enough?**

Several factors determine how much sleep is enough. Healthy adults, when given unlimited opportunity to sleep, will sleep on average between eight and eight and one-half hours. But normal sleep needs range from seven to nine hours.

Sleep needs also change throughout the lifecycle. The average amount of sleep a person generally needs to function well during the day for the different life stages are as follows:

- Infants need 16-18 hours of sleep
- Babies and Toddlers need 12 to 14 hours
- Preschoolers need 10 to 12 hours
- Elementary School Age children need a minimum of 9 hours
- Teenagers need a minimum of 9 hours
- Adults need 7-9 hours.

### **Tips for Getting a Good Night's Sleep**

1. Stick to a sleep schedule.
2. Exercise, but not too late in the day.
3. Avoid caffeine and nicotine
4. Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed
5. Avoid large meals and beverages late at night.
6. If possible, avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep.

7. Don't take naps after 3 p.m.
8. Take a hot bath before bed.
9. Have a good sleeping environment
10. Have the right sunlight exposure.
11. Don't lie in bed awake
12. See a doctor if sleep problem persists.

If you would like more information on getting enough sleep, call your local extension office and ask for the MF2830 publication.