



How Much Rest Do You Really Need?

Getting sufficient amounts of restful sleep is essential for good health. According to the Sleep Foundation¹, most adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep each day, though this can vary greatly from person to person depending on factors like physical activity, muscle mass, and chronic health conditions.

It has been estimated that as many as one-third of Americans² and Canadians³ get less than 7 hours of sleep each night, a level that has been linked to an increased risk for diabetes, cancer, and accidents. Similarly, the Institute of Medicine estimates⁴ that 50 to 70 million Americans are plagued with chronic sleep disorders, which can alter immune function and metabolism.

Being able to recognize the early warning signs of sleep deprivation can help you make the necessary lifestyle changes to get better rest.

Here are some signs that you may not be getting enough sleep:

You cannot think clearly. Problem solving and critical thinking activities are significantly muted when you are sleep deprived.

You doze off or feel tired throughout the day. Excessive sleepiness during waking hours is another indicator that you could be sleep deficient.

You are irritable. Irritability and increased vulnerability to stress could also indicate that you need more rest.

You have gained weight. While there are many factors that contribute to weight gain, a significant amount of research points to sleep insufficiency as being a big one. Hormone levels that regulate hunger and fullness shift during states of sleeplessness, and that can hinder your ability to regulate your appetite and your weight.

If you are not getting enough sleep, consider starting a sleep journal to see if you can identify any patterns that might be contributing to your sleeplessness. Then, if you still struggle to get enough rest, talk with your doctor to see what other treatment options are available.



1. <https://doi.org/10.5665/sleep.1846>
2. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works>

3. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28930365/>
4. <https://doi.org/10.5665/sleep.1846>