College students are the most sleep-deprived in the country. This may be due to the irregularity of their sleeping habits, their increased stress, or other factors. According to a 2001 study, only 11% of college students reported having good sleep quality and 73% reported occasional sleep problems. The same study found that 18% of college men and 30% of college women reported suffering from insomnia in the past three months, and over half reported feeling sleepy during the morning.

There is no “normal” amount of sleep, and the recommended hours of sleep per night varies amongst individuals and populations. However, most recommendations state that an individual should get anywhere from seven to nine hours of sleep per night. Sleep deprivation occurs due to work demands, psychosocial factors, medical conditions, or sleep disorders. As sleep debt accumulates, individuals experience a variety of disturbances, including decreased performance and increased risk for accidents and death.

Sleep deprivation exists when sleep is insufficient to support adequate alertness, performance, and health, either because of reduced total sleep time (decreased quantity) or fragmentation of sleep by brief arousals (decreased quality).

Sleep deprivation can be either acute or chronic and recommendations can be made based on the individual’s needs. So, make sure you tell your health provider exactly what’s going on so they can best help you!

**BRIEFLY:**
- **Collegiate students are the most sleep-deprived in the country due to a variety of factors**
- **Sleep is most important amongst this population due to the intense learning that happens in college**
- **Building good sleep habits makes a difference!**
WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION?

- Cognitive effects: Cognitive impairment is the most prominent effect of total sleep deprivation. Even after one night of sleep deprivation, logical reasoning thinking style, and ability to focus are all affected.

- Mood and judgment: Patients report poor mood, irritability, low energy, decreased libido, poor judgment, which resolve when normal sleep is restored.

- Respiratory physiology: sleep has been shown to depress the ventilatory responses and has even hospitalized patients!

- Circadian factors: the effects of sleep deprivation are most obvious early in the morning or late at night.

- Cardiovascular outcomes: long-term sleep deprivation has been shown to increase a patient’s risk of cardiovascular disease by up to 15%.

- Immunosuppression: The immune response is diminished in patients with sleep deprivation.

- Obesity: Sleep restriction may have negative outcomes on a patient’s metabolism and may increase an individual’s risk of Type II diabetes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP?

TEN BASIC RULES FOR A RESTFUL SLEEP

1. Sleep only as much as you need to feel rested then get out of bed.
2. Keep a regular sleep schedule, even on the weekends, if possible!
3. Avoid forcing sleep
4. Exercise regularly for at least 20 minutes, preferably 4 to 5 hours before bedtime
5. Avoid caffeinated beverages after lunch
6. Avoid alcohol near bedtime
7. Avoid smoking, especially in the evening
8. Do not go to bed hungry
9. Adjust bedroom environment
10. Deal with your worries before bedtime