



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

No Rest for the Weary

*Prevalence of Perceived or Insufficient Rest or Sleep by Days in the Past Month
Among U.S. Adults in Four States — BRFSS, 2006*

Recorded: March 4, 2008; posted: March 6, 2008

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Ana Benson] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Ana Benson, your host for this week.

Are you having problems sleeping at night? Rest assured you're not alone. Seventy million Americans — myself included — are walking the floor or staring at the ceiling right along with you. Lack of sleep is a silent epidemic that can lead to other problems besides just dozing off during a business meeting. Sleeplessness can lead to accidents, injuries, depression, and an inability to handle work responsibilities.

Dr. Lela McKnight-Eily is a researcher with CDC's National Center on Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Dr. McKnight-Eily is joining us today to discuss ways we can get a better night's sleep. Welcome to the show, Dr. McKnight-Eily.

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Thank you, Ana.

[Ana Benson] How did CDC come to recognize lack of rest or sleep as a serious public health concern?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] CDC has long recognized the importance of sleep on overall health and its relationship to both chronic diseases and sleep-related accidents. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and the National Health Interview Survey both contain sleep-related questions.

[Ana Benson] So then what's the difference between an occasional bad night's sleep and a more serious sleep disorder?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Ana, anyone can have an occasional bad night's sleep. A sleep disorder tends to be characterized by a cluster of signs and symptoms that occur, such as difficulty sleeping or waking, sleep disorder breathing, or abnormal movements of the body.

[Ana Benson] Then tell us about the negative effects on health caused by a lack of rest or sleep.

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Sure. Sleeping loss and sleeping disorders are associated with several physical and mental health problems, including diabetes, obesity, depression, and anxiety.

[Ana Benson] What causes sleeping problems?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Well, there's several causes of sleeping problems, including occupational factors such as extended work hours or shift work; lifestyle factors, such as using the Internet or TV; and also actual sleeping disorders, such as insomnia.

[Ana Benson] Well then, can you recommend some steps that a person can take to overcome this problem?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Sure. First of all, just following the recommended sleep guidelines for adults — sleeping an average of seven to nine hours per night. Second, maintaining a regular sleep schedule or time to go to sleep and to wake. Third, avoiding caffeine, nicotine, or alcohol several hours before going to sleep. And fourth, seeing a doctor if there are concerns about chronic sleep loss. There are both effective behavioral and medical interventions for persons with sleeping disorders.

[Ana Benson] Great tips. Where can our listeners go to get more information about sleep disorders?

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] www.cdc.gov/sleep.

[Ana Benson] Thank you, Dr. McKnight-Eily, for sharing this valuable information with our listeners today.

[Dr. McKnight-Eily] Thank you.

[Ana Benson] OK everyone. That's it for this week's show. Be sure to join us next week. Until then, sweet dreams and be well. This is Ana Benson for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] *For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.*