A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Rest Easy

Sleep Awareness Week, April 23-29, 2017
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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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

The amount of sleep we need each day depends on our age. Sufficient sleep is critical for maintaining good health.

Dr. Anne Wheaton is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting enough sleep every day. Welcome to the show, Dr. Wheaton.

[Dr. Wheaton] Thank you for having me.

[Latoya Simmons] Dr. Wheaton, are Americans in general getting enough sleep?

[Dr. Wheaton] Millions of Americans aren't getting enough sleep. More than one in three adults gets less than the recommended amount of sleep, but high school students are even worse off with more than two thirds getting less than what's recommended for their age.

[Latoya Simmons] What is a healthy amount of sleep?

[Dr. Wheaton] Adults should aim to get seven or more hours of sleep per night on a regular basis. Children and teens need more sleep, though. Infants spend most of their time asleep, although it's spread out over the day and night. As they get older, children need less sleep, but even teenagers need at least eight hours.

[Latoya Simmons] What can cause sleeping problems?

[Dr. Wheaton] There are multiple things that can contribute to sleep problems. Some factors are external, like work or school schedules. For example, people who do shift work or work multiple jobs tend to have trouble getting enough good quality sleep. Poor sleep habits, like having an irregular sleep schedule can also cause problems. A lot of people suffer from a sleep disorder which can seriously impact how much and how well you sleep.

[Latoya Simmons] What are some common sleep disorders?

[Dr. Wheaton] The most common sleep disorder is insomnia. Symptoms of insomnia are having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Everyone has this sort of trouble from time to time but when it happens on most nights, for an extended period of time, it can really have a negative impact on your quality of life. Another common sleep disorder is obstructive sleep apnea. If you

have sleep apnea, your breathing stops repeatedly while you're sleeping. If your bed partner tells you that you snore, especially if the snoring is very loud, that's a strong indication that you might have sleep apnea. But not everyone that has sleep apnea snores; you may just periodically gasp for air. Another sleep disorder is restless leg syndrome. If you have this condition, you have a strong urge to move your legs, especially at night, which can make it hard to fall asleep. If you have sleep problems and suspect you might have a sleep disorder, even if you just tend to feel really sleepy, in spite of a full night's sleep, you should talk to your health care provider. Sleep disorders can be treated which can help you get a good night's sleep.

[Latoya Simmons] What are some potential consequences of sleep disorders?

[Dr. Wheaton] If you have a sleep disorder, or just don't get enough sleep, you're at higher risk of drowsy driving crashes and injuries at work or sever chronic conditions, such as hypertension (or high blood pressure), obesity, and depression.

[Latoya Simmons] Give our listeners some tips for getting enough sleep.

[Dr. Wheaton] First, a good start is to make sleep a priority. Make sure you have enough time built into your schedule to get seven or more hours of sleep per night. Second, be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, even on the weekends. Third, set the stage for good sleep by making sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and not too hot or too cold. Fourth, turn off or remove televisions, computers, mobile devices, and other distracting or light-emitting electronic devices from the bedroom. Finally, avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime. Many people don't realize that alcohol can actually disturb your sleep. It may help you fall asleep but your sleep quality suffers.

[Latoya Simmons] Dr. Wheaton, where can listeners get more information about getting enough sleep?

[Dr. Wheaton] Listeners can go to CDC.gov/sleep.

[Latoya Simmons] Thanks, Dr. Wheaton. I've been talking today with Dr. Anne Wheaton about the importance of getting enough sleep.

You can improve your chances for a good night's sleep by making sleep a priority. Stick to a consistent sleep schedule and create a cool, quiet, relaxing environment.

Until next time, be well. This is Latoya Simmons for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

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