

WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT?

According to a study at Harvard <http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep/whats-in-it-for-you/health>;

- **Numerous studies have found that insufficient sleep increases a person's risk of developing serious medical conditions, including obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.**
- *Not getting enough sleep alters insulin resistance, which is associated with an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, and that can be very quickly induced by a single night's total sleep loss.*
- *Dr. Ann E. Rogers*
- What we do know is that sleeping fewer than about eight hours per night on a regular basis seems to increase the risk of developing a number of medical conditions.
 - Obesity—Several studies have linked insufficient sleep and weight gain. For example, one study found that people who slept fewer than six hours per night on a regular basis were much more likely to have excess body weight, while people who slept an average of eight hours per night had the lowest relative body fat of the study group
 - Cardiovascular disease and hypertension—A recent study found that even modestly reduced sleep (six to seven hours per night) was associated with a greatly increased the risk of coronary artery calcification, a predictor of future myocardial infarction (heart attack) and death due to heart disease.
 - Immune function—Interactions between sleep and the immune system have been well documented. Sleep deprivation increases the levels of many inflammatory mediators, and infections in turn affect the amount and patterns of sleep.⁸ While scientists are just beginning to understand these interactions, early work suggests that sleep deprivation may decrease the ability to resist infection
 - Common Cold – In a recent study, people who averaged less than seven hours of sleep a night were about three times more likely to develop cold symptoms than study volunteers who got eight or more hours of sleep when exposed to the cold-causing rhinovirus. In addition, those individuals who got

better quality sleep were the least likely to come down with a cold

- One of the most important of these functions may be to provide cells and tissues with the opportunity to recover from the wear and tear of daily life.
- **Inadequate sleep appears to affect the brain's ability to consolidate both factual information and procedural memories about how to do various physical tasks.**
- The majority of healthy adults require between 7.5 to 8.5 hours per 24-hour period...the National Sleep Foundation's 2008 Sleep in America poll found that many adults are apparently not meeting their sleep needs, sleeping an average of only 6 hours and 40 minutes during the week