

## SLEEP RESOURCE PACKET

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### GET ENERGY FROM SLEEP, NUTRITION & EXERCISE

The shelves at health-food stores groan under their weight -- super vitamin pills, grape seed extract and other tablets and tonics that promise renewed zest and energy. Not surprisingly, medical experts urge caution in using these products. Their advice: instead of popping a pill to restore long-lost vigor, try propping a pillow under your head and getting to bed earlier. More sleep, exercise and better nutrition are the natural path to greater vitality.

It's simple. If you're basically healthy, all it takes to increase your energy level is a commitment to the Big Three:

- Sleep longer and better.
- Eat healthy, high-energy foods.
- Get your body moving with an exercise program.

#### **Sleep**

Increasing your level of energy starts with getting enough sleep. Without it, says George Blackburn, M.D., Ph.D., "it's going to be hard for any diet or exercise to bring you to your best performance." Dr. Blackburn is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School.

The trouble is, experts don't agree on how much sleep a person should get each night. Nevertheless, research has shown that alertness falls even after a single night of only six hours' sleep. After several nights of five to six hours' sleep, people become significantly fatigued, says sleep expert Michael Bonnet, Ph.D., of the Kettering Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio.

The bottom line is that you need enough sleep to stay fully alert during your entire waking period. If you're not sharp right up to bedtime, sleep experts say, you need more rest.

If your sleep is frequently interrupted by emotional or physical problems, or by medications you are taking, talk to your doctor. You and your doctor can work out a sleep strategy to help you regain alertness and energy.

#### **Nutrition**

With time at a premium, it's sometimes easier to skip meals or "graze" on whatever food is available. It is best to discipline yourself to eat balanced meals on a regular schedule, say medical experts, even if you don't have much of an appetite. Food is fuel -- without it you'll run out of gas.

Not just any food will do: fruit, vegetables and grain should make up two-thirds of your daily caloric intake, says Dr. Blackburn, with meat and dairy making up the rest.

#### **Exercise**

Before you start exercising, consult with your doctor about what's right for you. Experts recommend getting 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity at least three to four days a week.

#### **Putting it Together**

The next time you're feeling run-down and think it's because you're not taking the right vitamin pills, consider the Big Three -- sleep, diet and exercise. These are the building blocks that will give you enough energy all day long. If you are having trouble getting adequate sleep or nutrition, talk to your healthcare provider.

## GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Are you one of the many people who believe that you need less sleep as you get older? Actually, after you become an adult, you need the same amount of sleep throughout your life, no matter what your age. The myth about needing less sleep may exist because many older people have trouble getting enough sleep.

As we age, our biological clock changes. This change can cause you to get sleepy earlier in the evening and to wake up earlier than you used to. As a result, if you don't allow yourself to go to bed when you are tired, you may feel sluggish during the day. Try these suggestions to help you sleep tight.

- Don't spend too much time in bed. Don't lie in bed trying to get to sleep at night or lounge there too long in the morning. For example, if you wake up at 5 a.m. and can't get back to sleep, get up.
- Exercise. Regular physical activity helps you sleep better.
- Increase your exposure to light later in the day. For example, do some gardening or take a walk on a sunny afternoon. This resets your biological clock, which can help you stay up later at night and sleep later in the morning.
- Limit naps. A 15- to 20-minute nap no later than early afternoon can give you an energy boost, while a longer nap can throw off your sleeping schedule.
- Avoid caffeine after lunch and alcohol after dinner. Caffeine can stay in your body and delay sleep. Alcohol may make you sleepy, but it leads to disrupted sleep.

Practice good sleep habits. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day. If you're tossing and turning, get up and do something for a while. Reserve your bed for sleep and intimacy only. If you are so sleepy during the day that you can't do regular activities, or if you try these tips and still can't sleep, talk with your doctor. Sometimes difficulty sleeping is caused by a medical condition or by medication.

Remember, a good night's sleep can really make your day better. Don't wait another night to get the sleep you need.

### Conditions That Disturb Sleep

There are two sleep disorders that affect us more as we age: sleep apnea and restless legs syndrome. Sleep apnea is a breathing disorder that causes you to stop breathing briefly while you sleep. It can happen many times during the night. With sleep apnea, you don't wake fully when your breathing is interrupted, so you may not realize that it is happening. If your spouse complains about your heavy snoring or tells you that you appear to be having trouble breathing while you sleep, ask your doctor about sleep apnea.

Restless legs syndrome causes tingling, pain, tickling or the feeling that something is crawling in your legs. These sensations can cause you to kick your legs in your sleep and make your sleep restless. They are not dangerous, but if they keep you awake, tell your doctor

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## GETTING AN EVEN BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

As mentioned earlier, despite common belief, aging doesn't cause sleep problems, and seniors don't need less sleep as they grow older.

Most older people sleep poorly, or not long enough, because of ailments associated with aging, such as arthritis, physical disabilities, respiratory problems and depression.

Lack of exercise, heart disease, anxiety, stress and menopause also can disrupt sleep, and many medications seniors take can cause insomnia.

### Changing Patterns

"Many people believe that sleeping poorly is just part of growing old. In fact, seniors who fall asleep during the day do so because they aren't getting enough quality sleep at night," says Sonia Ancoli-Israel, M.D., director of the Sleep Disorders Clinic at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Medical Center in California.

Though the need for eight hours of sleep each night doesn't change with age, sleep patterns do. The body's circadian rhythm, a biological clock that controls sleep, naturally advances a few hours as a person grows older. When that happens, older people may feel sleepy earlier in the evening and wake up earlier in the morning. By observing their natural sleep patterns and making lifestyle changes, seniors can help keep their internal clocks on time and overcome sleep problems.

### Sleep Remedies

Sleep and aging experts agree that one's daytime activities and sleep environment are critical to getting a good night's sleep.

Try the following remedies if you have trouble sleeping.

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications could be disturbing your sleep.
- Stay active. Maintain a moderate level of daily activity and do gentle exercise.
- Spend some time outdoors during daylight hours. Sunlight can help set your biological clock.
- Pay attention to what you eat and drink in the evening. Consuming foods and drinks that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea or cola can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages in the evening. They can make you fall asleep faster, but they cause early morning awakenings and fitful sleep.
- Don't smoke. Smokers are more likely to have trouble sleeping than nonsmokers.
- Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet and cool.
- Replace your mattress if it's lumpy, sagging or worn out. A comfortable mattress that offers good support can help you fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Ask a doctor for help if your partner snores or has an illness that disturbs your sleep.

## TOOTH GRINDING

Bruxism, also known as tooth grinding, is a sleep disorder in which a person frequently clenches or grinds his or her teeth. It can cause excessive wear on tooth surfaces and lead to dental problems. It can also cause jaw pain or even jaw dislocation. It is more common in children than in adults, and frequently ceases when the child's permanent molars appear.

What causes a person to grind his or her teeth isn't known, but dental experts say the behavior in adults is linked to tension, aggression or anxiety. Rarely, people grind their teeth during the day, instead of at night. Adults who have bruxism often also have other sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea or snoring. They often feel fatigued after a night's sleep or experience headaches in the morning.

A dentist diagnoses bruxism by a patient's medical history or by noting abnormal wear on the teeth. A spouse may complain of the grinding noise, often loud enough to be heard across a room.

Bruxism can be treated in several ways. Behavior-modification techniques teach the patient to relax the jaw and practice keeping the teeth apart while the lips are together. A mouth guard can be worn at night to keep the teeth from touching. For a person who grinds his or her teeth during the day, biofeedback can be useful. An electronic device can signal when the jaw is clenched and help change behavior.

### What to Do

If you have any of the symptoms or signs of bruxism, or if you suspect that you have sleep apnea.

### Special Concerns for Children With Bruxism

Call your child's dentist if your child is grinding his or her teeth.

### Self-Care Steps for Bruxism

- If you need to wear a splint to prevent bruxism, follow your dentist's instructions on how and when to wear it.
- Take steps to reduce stress in your life.