

How Much Sleep Is Healthy, After All?

When we were young, going to bed was a chore that we fought against as much as we could. After all, all the coolest television programming seemed to be happening right as the call for bedtime sounded... it was so unfair! Days that we got to stay up late were something to brag about, and tell all our friends.

As adults, we seem to have the opposite problem: not enough sleep. It seems that with all the work, family and life obligations, every day we struggle to get enough hours in bed, even without counting an occasional need to relax and have fun. Now, in our adult lives, getting a good amount of sleep is something to brag about instead of staying up late.

"I went to sleep at 9 PM last night," we brag about it to our coworkers. They shake their heads in appreciation and amazement:

"How did you manage to turn in so early? Wow, so lucky," they exclaim, going on to discuss and try to remember the last time they got "8 hours."

Eight hours of sleep seemed to have been the go-to standard for a long time – get 8 hours, and you should be good to go, they said. A recent study by the National Sleep Foundation revealed new information on our sleeping habits, and came out with updated sleep hours that suggest that for most of us, even 8 hours may not be enough.

Good news for teenagers who love to sleep in – the National Sleep Foundation suggests 8 to 10 hours of sleep for healthy development among ages 14 to 17, and up to 11 hours of sleep a night for kids 6 to 13.

For a healthy adults ages 18 – 64, 7 to 9 hours of sleep is an ideal amount of shut-eye for a proper rest. The deviation comes from a natural physiological and preferential differences among people – some feel fully rested after 7 hours while others need all 9. Less than 7 hours is typically considered unhealthy, while more than 9 can get you sleep-saturated in order to prepare for a period of no sleep, or high stress.

Older adults ages 65+ are recommended 7 to 8 hours of sleep, surprisingly less than the main age group of adults.

Regardless of what age group you belong to, be sure to get enough hours of sleep every night... 9 hours of sleep a night may seem difficult for someone with a full schedule, but consider the benefits of being sharper, healthier and happier... for that, you can spare an hour or so a day.

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