10 Habits for Highly Effective Sleep

(NaturalNews – Dr. David Jockers) Poor sleep is a very serious threat to an individual's health. Poor sleeping habits lead to altered hormone balances and circadian rhythms. This process accelerates the aging process and speeds up the development of degenerative diseases such as heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and osteoarthritis among others.

Ten habits for highly effective sleep

1. Proper nutrition: Foods that are high in sugar and carbohydrates are going to cause blood sugar imbalances that can cause sleeping problems. Instead, build your meals around phytonutrient rich vegetables and healthy fat sources such as avocados, coconut products, nuts, organic and grass-fed animal products. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, chocolate and raw cacao within six hours of bedtime.

2. Regular sleep-wake cycle: The body works best on routine rhythms. For optimal sleeping patterns go to sleep the same time each night and wake up the same time each morning. The most you should deviate if at all possible would be 30 minutes.

Research has shown that people need at least seven and up to nine hours of sleep for optimal health. Every hour of sleep between 9 p.m. and midnight is equivalent to two hours of quality sleep after midnight.

3. Only use your bed for sleeping: Many people do all sorts of activities in their bed. For optimal sleeping habits, attempt to train your body that when you get in your bed it is time to

go to sleep. Get any other sort of distractions out of your bedroom.

4. Darkness: In the absence of light, the pineal gland produces melatonin. Melatonin is known as the regulator of the sleep/wake cycle in the body. It is produced in the pineal gland of the brain and monitors sleep cycles while playing an important role in healing and anti-oxidant protection.

Any sort of light can interfere with normal melatonin production and negatively affect sleeping patterns. Turn off all lights, turn your alarm clock away from you and close the blinds.

5. Hydration: There is a delicate hydration balance that should be achieved for optimal sleep. You want to ensure that your body is not dehydrated as this will increase stress hormones and disrupt sleep while too much hydration will fill the bladder and lead to bathroom breaks overnight. Be sure to drink eight ounces of water 90 minutes before bed and leave a glass of water near your bed in case you wake up thirsty. Go to the bathroom and empty your bladder before getting in bed.

6. Keep the room cool: When you fall asleep, your body temperature homeostasis (temperature your brain is trying to achieve) goes down. If the room temperature is too cold or too hot it can cause stress on the system and disrupt sleep. The typical range that works best is between 65-70 degrees F.

7. Relaxation tea: There are many organic teas on the market that are loaded with herbs like chamomile, passionflower and valerian root which naturally help relax the body and induce sleepiness.

8. Melatonin supplement: This supplement can enhance the body’s natural sleep/wake cycle. Many individuals have reported benefits using this with great success.

9. Gratitude: Many individuals allow fear, worry and anxiety to disrupt sleep cycles. Practicing gratefulness allows the body to relax more effectively. Keep a gratitude journal and write down three things you are genuinely grateful for that day.

10. Prioritize: Sleep is not a heavily valued commodity in our fast-paced world. However, prioritizing your sleep will allow you to function at a higher percentage of your potential. Good sleep habits allow you to be more productive and enjoy your life much more.

Sources for this article include:

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