



## Getting the Sleep You Need

A large proportion of college students are sleep deprived, regularly getting less rest than they need each night. When students routinely have problems with sleep, learning and memory suffer. Motor skills can be impaired. Resistance to illness drops, particularly important in a residential college environment.

### CAUSES OF SLEEP PROBLEMS:

#### Poor Sleep Habits

An irregular bedtime, frequent naps, late-night activities, or weekend sleeping-in can scramble your body's normal sleep/wake schedules. Insufficient and poor quality sleep often becomes a mosaic of cause and effect cemented by habit.

#### Emotional Stress

Emotional stress accounts for more than 50% of chronic sleep problems. Early morning wake-up is typical of depression, while feelings of anxiety strike at bedtime. Major stress can start insomnia or cause excessive fatigue. And sleep difficulties that begin with a single incident may linger long after the stress is resolved.

#### Physical Illness

Physical disorders are also important to consider as sources of sleep difficulties. Illness and accompanying symptoms such as pain, nausea, and shortness of breath often disturb sleep patterns.

#### Diet and Exercise Habits

Alcohol or caffeine near bedtime can have negative effects on one's sleeping patterns. A large meal or strenuous exercise close to bedtime can temporarily boost the body's metabolism, chasing away sleep.

### DOES YOUR BODY NEED MORE REST?

If a significant number of the statements below are true for you, you may want to consult your class dean, a counselor at Dick's House, or the Academic Skills Center about improving your sleep habits.

1. It takes you at least an hour to fall asleep every night of the week.
2. You can't get out of bed when the alarm sounds.
3. You worry about getting enough sleep most nights of the week.
4. When you wake up in the night, you can't get back to sleep.
5. You use sleeping pills or alcohol to help you sleep.
6. You feel exhausted from lack of sleep.
7. You sleep in or take daytime naps to make up for lack of sleep.
8. You get drowsy during the day, or need caffeine to stay alert.

