

SLEEP LIKE A BABY

A NORMAL SLEEP is essential for the facilitation of motor functions, consolidation of learning and memory, and restoration of strength and physical and mental energy, says **Dr Deepak Chaturvedi, Physician, Endocrinologist, Diabetologist, Anti-aging Specialist and Bariatrician at the AMAAYA™ Anti-aging Wellness Clinic.**

A newborn baby sleeps for 16 to 20 hours a day and a child, 10 to 12 hours. The total sleep time drops to nine to 10 hours at age 10 and about seven to seven and a half hours during adolescence. An adult needs at least six and a half to seven hours of sound sleep daily.



In the current fast paced world, people are not getting enough sleep. Working against the circadian rhythm has completely distorted the sleep-wake cycle, leading to various neuro-hormonal changes in the body. People are living in complete 'Social Jet Lag'.

The sleep deprivation leads to the following hormonal imbalances:

- Increased levels of stress hormones (Cortisol)
- Decreased secretion of the growth hormone
- Decreased secretion of the luteinizing hormone in females
- Decreased secretion of testosterone in men

If continued to remain for a long period, these hormonal changes may lead to infertility, obesity and other metabolic

and reproductive disorders. Long standing sleep deprivation brings about premature aging.

Sleep deprivation (whether total or partial) has deleterious effects on emotions and cognition. It also causes day time sleepiness, fatigue, irritability and difficulty in concentration. Skilled performance goes down. Self care is neglected, judgement is impaired and communication skill suffers. With increased deprivation, neuropsychiatric symptoms like illusions and hallucinations may occur.

Chronic sleep deprivation is a pro-inflammatory state and may lead to generalised systemic inflammation, leading

to chronic diseases (Ischemic heart disease, diabetes, etc).

People try to catch up with their sleep deprivation on weekends by sleeping extra hours. But, the sleep obtained in these extra hours is never equal to the sleep lost in the week. This way, the damage caused is never recovered completely and acumulative effect occurs, leading to long term complications. Secondly, sleeping in the odd hours of the weekends again disturbs the circadian rhythm and brings more damage.

The best way to deal with sleep deprivation complications is to avoid sleep deprivation and maintain good sleep hygiene throughout the week. A restorative six and a half to seven hours of uninterrupted night sleep is mandatory for good health and happiness.

The following lifestyle changes may help

- Avoid caffeine at least six hours before bedtime
- Avoid alcohol or smoking two hours before bedtime
- Get regular exercise, but at least three hours before bedtime
- Establish regular bedtime hours, waking up each morning at the same time
- Do not use bedroom to work
- Meditation and light music may help