

May is Better Sleep Month

The aim of Better Sleep Month is to encourage people to establish better sleeping patterns. As with diet and exercise, sleep is crucial to our physical, emotional, and mental health. Many experts believe that the optimal amount of sleep is between 7.5 and 8.5 hours each night.

Lack of sleep can affect hormones, leading to mood swings as well as delayed reaction and coordination. It can also increase the risk of developing dangerous chronic conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, and even diabetes. Poor sleep can make it harder to fight off illnesses and put stress on your relationships.

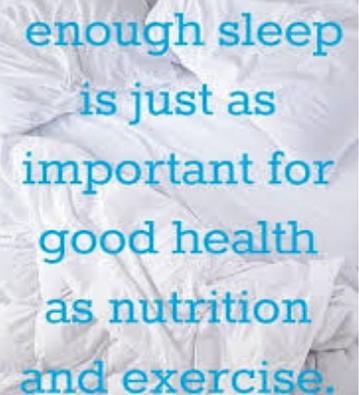
A critical component of getting a good night's sleep is a good mattress. Did you know that the lifespan of a mattress is five to seven years? It is time to replace it once you've reached this threshold. Buying a mattress that is too small is one of the biggest mistakes that people make. A couple who are sleeping on a "double" think they have enough space, but it only leaves each person with about 27 inches of personal space (or about the width of a crib). In addition to the width, the length of a single and double is too short for some adults at only about 75 inches long.

Tips to Choosing the Best Mattress

- Before you research your mattress options, determine your budget and consider your personal needs
- Research your options before you go to the store, narrowing down the mattress size and type
- Read reviews on websites you trust. The more reviews a website has, the more likely it is to be a reliable source
- Choose a retailer that provides you with the amount of information you need, and with a knowledgeable salesperson
- Once you have found a few mattresses you are interested in, try them out! Take off your shoes and lie down in various positions. The more time you take, the less likely you will have buyer's remorse later

Sleep Myths

- **Saturday sleep-in.** You can't catch up on sleep so it's best to plan for 7 to 8 hours each night
- **Aging out of sleep.** While older people may get up several times in the night, they still require the same amount of sleep
- **During sleep, your brain rests.** The body rests during sleep, however, the brain remains active, gets 'recharged' and still controls many body functions including breathing
- **Warm milk makes you sleepy.** There is no evidence that supports this, but you may find it comforting to do so which will relax you at bedtime
- **Firm mattress is best.** A mattress choice is a very personal thing and what feels good to one person may not for another



enough sleep
is just as
important for
good health
as nutrition
and exercise.