

Extension Tip of the Week February 23, 2009

Are you getting enough sleep?

When the alarm goes off in the morning, are you tempted to hit the snooze button? Maybe you find yourself prodding other family members to get up in the morning. Why is it that every minute of sleep in the morning is more precious in the morning, but not at night? Studies show that sleep deprivation is running rampant and our generations are getting far less sleep than earlier generations. Adults and children are getting up about the same time as they always have. We are just going to bed later.

What's to blame for us staying up late and losing out on sleep? It might be the amount of activities we have added to our schedules and no doubt it's our lifestyle that allows us to go anywhere and do about anything at any hour of the day. You can, in many communities, buy groceries at midnight if you want! Some of us will remember when they played the national anthem on the television and the day was done!

The lack of sleep affects all of us, young and old. We know that students are less able to pay attention in school, families experience more conflict, and we all are at greater risk of accidents when we don't get enough rest and sleep. Research shows the work performance, driving, ability to cope with stress, patience with our kids and co-workers, or about every aspect of our life is affected by the lack of adequate rest and sleep.

What's the remedy? Simply put, more sleep. Experts report that we need between 8 and 9 hours of sleep. For kids and adults, the same recommendations apply. Try to go to bed at the same time each night. Follow a bed time routine that is calming. Limit caffeine consumption later in the day and avoid heavy meals prior to bedtime. On the other hand, avoid going to bed hungry as hunger pangs can wake you up.

Unwind earlier in the evening so your body and mind can relax. Falling asleep can be difficult when your mind is racing or working through problems, weighing decisions and reviewing the day that is done or the day that is ahead. Good luck on getting your well deserved ZZZ's.

Source: The Survival Guide for Working Moms (and Other Stressed-Out Adults)