



Live Well, Work Well

March 2024

Understanding Your Kidney Health

March is National Kidney Month, making it a great time to take charge of your health by lowering your chances of developing kidney disease. Your kidneys filter your blood to remove waste and extra water to create urine. They also make vital hormones that produce red blood cells, promote bone health and regulate blood pressure. As such, the kidneys play a vital role in your body.

The National Kidney Foundation reports that 1 in 3 adults are at risk for life-threatening kidney disease, but most don't even know it.

Risk Factors

Kidney disease is a leading cause of death in the United States. Today, 15% of Americans are affected by kidney disease—and most won't have symptoms unless their kidneys fail. There are numerous physical signs of kidney disease, but most people attribute them to other conditions. If you have one of these risk factors, you may be at risk for kidney disease:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Excess weight
- Family history of kidney disease

Kidney-friendly Lifestyle Tips

Your kidneys work hard for you, so taking good care of them is essential. Consider these tips:

- **Get tested.** Regular screening for kidney damage or disease can allow you to keep track of your kidney's health and help prevent future damage.
- **Reduce over-the-counter drug usage.** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., ibuprofen) can cause kidney damage if taken regularly, so never exceed the recommended dosage.
- **Exercise regularly.** Exercising helps lower your blood pressure and boost heart health—both critical factors in preventing kidney damage. Focus on being active for at least 30 minutes a day.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Studies reveal that eating whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables is one of the best ways to keep kidneys healthy. A plant-based diet may also help prevent and treat kidney disease.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Water helps flush sodium and toxins from your kidneys. It's recommended that men should get about 15.5 cups of fluids each day, and women need about 11.5 cups.

Contact your doctor for more information about kidney health and warning signs of kidney disease.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



The Wellness Committee values your opinions and ideas!

To contact us, send an email to:

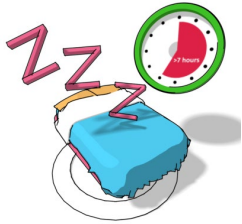
wellness@hospiceofthepiedmont.org

Think Well, Be Well

Provided by Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC

Sleep Matters for Mental Health

When you don't get enough sleep, not only does it affect your physical health, but it also takes a toll on your mental health. In fact, mental health and sleep are so closely related that a lack of sleep can often lead to issues such as anxiety or depression.



Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

Unfortunately, studies consistently show that Americans struggle to get a good night's sleep. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 3 adults aren't getting enough rest or sleep every day. A lack of sleep can result in physical symptoms (e.g., an increased risk of developing obesity, diabetes and other chronic health conditions) and psychological effects (e.g., low mood, anxiety, irritability and poor cognitive performance). This article explores the relationship between sleep and mental health and provides tips for a better night's sleep.

The Impact of Sleep on Mental Health

Sleep is essential for optimal health—and that includes mental health. When individuals consistently endure sleep deprivation or encounter poor-quality sleep, a cascade of adverse effects on their mental health ensues. One primary facet that is affected is emotional regulation; inadequate sleep can render individuals more susceptible to mood swings, heightened stress levels and irritability, which can exacerbate the symptoms of anxiety and depression, making it challenging to cope with life's demands.

Furthermore, sleep plays a pivotal role in cognitive functioning. During deep sleep, the brain engages in memory consolidation, emotional processing and toxin removal. Disruptions in this process can compromise the ability to concentrate, make decisions, and effectively solve problems.

Over time, chronic sleep disturbances can contribute to the development or exacerbation of mental health conditions. Addressing sleep problems and prioritizing healthy sleep practices is a significant step in enhancing mental well-being, bolstering emotional resilience and promoting cognitive clarity.

Tips For a Better Night's Sleep

Sleep and mental health are both complex issues impacted by various factors. However, given their close association, research continues to explore how quality sleep can benefit mental health. Signs of poor sleep quality include not feeling rested even after getting enough sleep, waking up repeatedly during the night and experiencing symptoms of sleep disorders (e.g., snoring or gasping for air).

Sleep quality is often impacted by an individual's health, environment, mental health and lifestyle. Consider the following tips for better sleep:

- **Eat nutritiously.** Good eating habits can help you sleep better and feel energized all day. Also, avoid big meals right before going to bed.
- **Exercise regularly.** A workout can help relieve stress, reset your circadian clock, reduce sleep disorder symptoms and boost your daytime energy level. Just be sure to avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime.
- **Keep a consistent sleep schedule and routine.** Try to have the same wake-up and bedtimes, including during the weekend.
- **Establish a bedtime routine.** A routine can help your brain unwind and recognize that it's time to sleep. Keep track of bedtime habits that help you fall asleep, like listening to relaxing music, reading before bed or taking a warm bath. Repeat those activities each night.

- **Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet.** Create a good sleep environment, including a comfortable room temperature (between 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit), minimal noise and sufficient darkness.
- **Put the electronics away at bedtime.** Blue-light-emitting electronic devices can prohibit you from getting a good night's sleep. To reduce the effects of these sleep-stealing devices, refrain from using them for at least an hour before bed.
- **Avoid the use of alcohol, caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime.** Stimulants like caffeine and nicotine promote alertness, making falling and staying asleep difficult. While alcohol may help you fall asleep at night, it disrupts your sleep and leaves you waking up not as restful. Therefore, it's important to start limiting these substances about four hours before bed.
- **Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.** While our bodies are programmed to slow urine production during sleep, excessive fluid intake could cause an unwanted trip to the bathroom at night. Try to stop drinking beverages two hours before going to bed.

Summary

Getting proper sleep is extremely important in improving and maintaining good mental health. Adequate sleep not only aids emotional regulation, reducing the risk of mood disorders, but it also supports cognitive functioning, enhancing your ability to think clearly and make sound decisions. Insufficient sleep may increase negative emotional responses to stressors and decrease positive emotions. As such, chronic sleep deprivation or poor sleep quality can contribute to the development or exacerbation of mental health issues, creating a harmful cycle.

Prioritizing healthy sleep habits is critical for fostering mental resilience, emotional stability and cognitive vitality. Contact a doctor for more information on improving your sleep habits or addressing sleep issues. Additionally, if you're concerned about your mental health, talk to your doctor or a licensed mental health professional, or contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).

Important Functions of Protein

Proteins are made up of many building blocks called amino acids and are fundamental for proper body functioning and good health. Recognizing the multifaceted importance of protein underscores the need to incorporate protein sources into your diet to maintain optimal health and function across various bodily systems.

Protein plays a crucial role in the following body functions:

- **Growth and maintenance**—Proteins are instrumental in the regeneration and repair of organ and muscle tissues.
- **Communication**—Some proteins are hormones and act as chemical messengers between cells, tissues and organs.
- **Storage and transportation**—Some proteins transport nutrients (e.g., vitamins and minerals), cholesterol and oxygen throughout your entire body, while others store them.
- **Fluid balance**—Proteins in your blood maintain the fluid balance between your blood and the surrounding tissues.
- **Immune health**—Antibodies and other components in your immune system are proteins that fight infections and disease.

Collectively, these functions make protein one of the most important nutrients for your body. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your diet.



Mark your calendar!



Physical & Mental Wellness

Tai Chi

Mar. 22 at 12:30 p.m.
(Asheboro)



Team Wellness

Advance Directives
Clinic

March 19
Morning (Asheboro)
Afternoon (High Point)



Financial Wellness

Check-in with
Braxton Towery:

Mar. 19 & 20 (High Point)
Mar. 21 (Asheboro)