

If sleep issues or mental health concerns persist, consider seeking advice from a healthcare professional. Getting your sleep problem diagnosed and treated may be a key part of improving your overall mental health. Some common sleep disorders are:

- **Insomnia.** Insomnia is characterized by difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking too early that contributes to problems with next day functioning, such as fatigue, moodiness, sleepiness or reduced energy. There are two types of insomnia including short term and chronic. Short-term insomnia lasts for up to three months and chronic insomnia occurs at least three times per week and lasts for at least three months.
- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA).** OSA is a common sleep disorder where your airway collapses part or all the way when you sleep. Signs of OSA include loud or frequent snoring, daytime sleepiness or tiredness, choking or gasping in sleep. Many individuals with OSA have depression. The depression may improve when OSA is treated.



SLEEP AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Behavioral Sleep Medicine Clinic

This specialty clinic serves adults 18 years of age and older with sleep disorders that can be effectively treated with psychological and behavioral treatments. Sleep disorders most commonly seen in this program include insomnia, sleeping pill dependence, circadian rhythm sleep disorders, and difficulty adjusting to therapies for sleep apnea.

Call **734-764-0231** to learn more about scheduling an appointment.

To learn more about sleep

- American Academy of Sleep Medicine: sleepeducation.org
- National Sleep Foundation: thensf.org



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Why is sleep important?

Sleep is essential for overall health and well-being. It plays a critical role in:

Emotion Regulation: Sleep helps stabilize your mood and manage stress, reducing the risk of mental health issues like anxiety and depression.

Cognitive Function: Adequate sleep enhances memory, concentration, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for effective daily functioning.

Physical Health: Sleep supports immune function, tissue repair, and growth, contributing to better overall health.

Energy and Motivation: Quality sleep boosts energy levels and motivation, improving both productivity and the ability to engage in physical activities.

Mental Health: By maintaining the balance of neurotransmitters and hormones related to mood and stress, sleep promotes a resilient mental state. Prioritizing sleep is vital for maintaining a healthy mind and body.

How much sleep does an adult need?

There is no precise number of hours of sleep at night that guarantees that you will wake up feeling totally refreshed -- based on your age and lifestyle, what's recommended for you likely falls within a certain range.

What are the consequences of lack of sleep?

Lack of sleep can lead to a range of negative consequences on both mental and physical health. Mentally, it can cause increased irritability, mood swings, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating, affecting your ability to think and learn effectively. Physically, poor sleep may weaken the immune system, increase the risk of weight gain, or chronic



medical conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. Additionally, long-term sleep deprivation can impair reaction times and judgment, which can be dangerous, especially while driving or operating machinery. Prioritizing sufficient sleep is essential for maintaining optimal health and functioning.

How does sleep affect mental health?

Sleep and mental health are closely linked. Quality sleep helps regulate mood and emotions, reducing the risk of issues like anxiety and depression. When you don't get enough good quality sleep, it can disrupt brain function, leading to increased stress, irritability, and difficulty concentrating. Over time, poor sleep can contribute to the development or worsening of mental health conditions. Prioritizing good sleep habits can therefore be a crucial part of maintaining and improving mental health.

How does mental health affect sleep?

Mental health significantly impacts sleep quality and patterns. Conditions like anxiety and depression can lead to difficulties falling or staying asleep, as well as cause insomnia or restless nights. Stress and racing thoughts may disrupt your ability to relax, making it challenging to achieve restful sleep. Furthermore, poor mental health can affect the natural sleep-wake cycle, leading to fatigue and irregular sleep schedules. Managing mental health effectively is crucial for improving sleep quality and achieving restorative sleep.

Sleep and specific mental health problems

Most mental health disorders are associated with sleep disturbances.

Individuals with depression often have difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early. Some individuals might sleep for more hours than usual when depressed.

Individuals who suffer from anxiety may have difficulty falling asleep or have difficulty getting back to sleep after waking up during the night.

Other mental health disorders that commonly have sleep disturbances include Bipolar Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Substance Use Disorders and Schizophrenia.

Strategies for improving sleep and mental health

Practicing good sleep hygiene is fundamental to maintaining good mental health. Important practices include:

- Establish a regular sleep schedule by going to bed and waking up at the same time each day, even on weekends.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine, such as reading or taking a warm bath, to signal your body that it's time to wind down.
- Limit exposure to screens and bright lights before bed, as they can interfere with your natural sleep cycle.
- Practice mindfulness or relaxation techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing exercises, to reduce stress and clear your mind.
- Ensure your sleep environment is comfortable, dark, and quiet.
- Additionally, staying active and eating a balanced diet can support both sleep and mental well-being.