

PRASIDA AYURVEDA CLINIC

LIGHT ON SLEEP

Ayurvedacharyas Dr CM Pradyumna B.A.M.S, Dr Mrs Sabitha Pradyumna B.A.M.S

Ayurveda defines life as a synergy between psyche, the soul and material body. This life process is nourished by multitude of energies of which sleep or *Nidraa* is very important and is an integral part that none can do away with. *Manas* or mind can go through states of *Jaagruti* (state of wakefulness), *Svapna* (dream), *Sushupti* (energizing deep sleep) and *Turiya* (Yogic self realization). Sleep is glorified as unconscious, uninterrupted meditation of five to seven hours taking you through wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep and back to a state of wakefulness. Healthy sleep nourishes mind and body and augments strength, complexion and digestive efficiency and is the only re-charger your mind can be plugged into. The equation is - Deeper the healthy sleep, lesser duration shall suffice.

You sleep healthy if your body has been active and mind calm, unhealthy sleep is born of lethargy, *Yogasanas* / exercises can rectify the ill effects of inertia. The physical causes of disturbed sleep are old age, going to bed when you are either thirsty or hungry, or having eaten insufficiently, wrong kind of mattress that is either too very soft or hard or uncomfortable, or any disease interfering with normal healthy sleep. The psychological causes are sorrow, grief, anxiety, pain, celebrative mood etc

Factors like academics, need to fall in sync with other countries' work timings, to increase productivity, vigil or entertainment makes people to stay awake at night and this loss of sleep can be compensated by sleeping for half that time during the day necessarily before a meal.

If you have not been able to sleep well or have got entangled in a vicious circle of loss of sleep - anxiety – loss of sleep then refer to sleep inducers mentioned below.

SLEEP INDUCERS –

- Tranquil mind in an active body achieved through a combination of meditation / pranayama and yoga/ exercise/ active lifestyle
- **Ending the day with a thanksgiving prayer and going to bed with a sense of security, contentment, accomplishment and benevolence**
- Story telling (*read listening*), massage, oiling the scalp and soles or a warm water footbath show tangible results
- Listening to soothing (non-stimulating) instrumental music that is essentially devoid of any percussion / beats
- Total darkness is very supportive, but for obvious reasons if you prefer lighting it should be a very faint or deflected illumination
- Non addictive foods like sweetened milk, raisins etc
- Comfortable mattress, seating and travel

CAUTION -

- Do not do anything that contradicts sleep inducers
- Do not sleep in the day; this can greatly contribute to lethargy, weight gain, fluid retention and related ill health
- **Do not sleep longer than you deserve** as it can start off a vicious circle of sleep-lethargy-sleep and this habit is difficult to overcome
- Do not sleep soon after a meal; at least allow 2 hours between dinner and sleep.
- Avoid stimulants like coffee, tea or chocolate at bed time
- Avoid watching disturbing or hilarious programs at bed time
