

# WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

MARCH 2021

## HEALTHY HARMONY - Healthy Sleep Habits

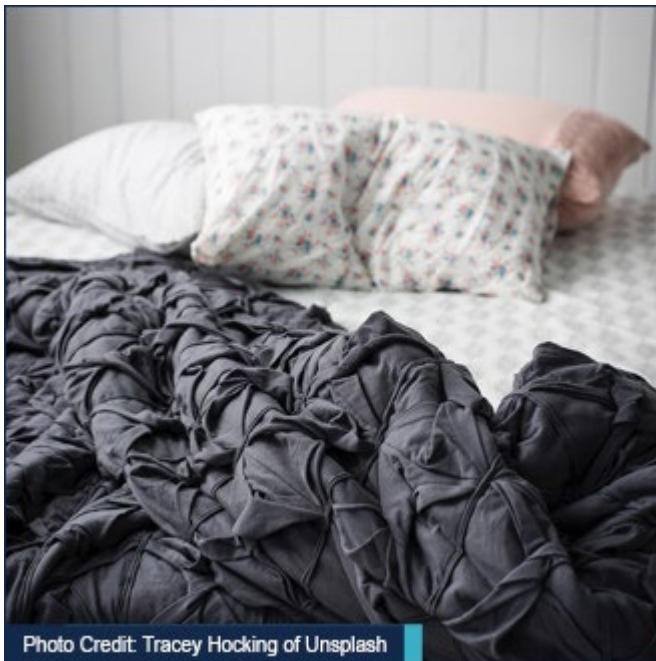


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*By Jackie Billhymer*

Ah, sleep. As a mom to an almost 6-year-old child, I still remember the early years when I truly thought a good night's sleep would never happen for me again.

Thankfully, better sleeping patterns did return, although I am still guilty of being a night owl.

March 8-14 hosts Sleep Awareness Week. March 14 also happens to be when Daylight Saving Time returns and we lose an hour of sleep. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a resource called [Your Guide to Healthy Sleep](#). It has an abundance of great information about why

sleep is so important and what to do if you suffer from a lack of it.

We know we need sleep, but studies have shown that it is often moved to the backburner in our busy lives. Just like eating the right foods and getting some form of physical activity each day, sleep has an important role in our overall well-being.

So why is it so important? Getting enough sleep not only gives our body and brain down time, but it also helps improve performance, mood, and overall health. **When we sleep, our brain**

**and body are still active and carry out a number of important tasks to help us stay healthy and function at our best.**

It is recommended that adults get 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Getting the right amount of sleep has a positive effect on how well we think, react, work, learn, and get along with others. Over time, a lack of quality sleep may mean we are more likely to become depressed. Some tips for a better night's rest are:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day – even on weekends
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days, but not later than 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Get outside! Thirty minutes in natural sunlight helps regulate sleep patterns
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed
- While naps can boost your brainpower, keep them to under an hour and do not take them after 3 p.m.
- Take time to unwind! Take a hot bath or shower, grab a book, and avoid using any electronics (e.g., TV, tablet, computer, cell phone) just before bedtime

If you find yourself struggling with sleep or if you feel constantly tired and drained during the day, it is important that you talk with your doctor about your sleep habits. The NIH also has a downloadable [Sleep Diary](#) resource that can help you track the quality and quantity of your sleep. You can share this information with your doctor and get support for better sleep and overall wellbeing.

