Skeltons Chemists

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Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm
Saturday - 8.30am - 3pm
Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for March 2022

1. How much of our lives do we spend asleep?
2. Why do we sleep?
3. What happens when we sleep?
4. What are these stages?
5. What is REM sleep?
6. What happens when we are in deep sleep?
7. What happens if you don't get enough sleep?
8. What is sleep efficiency?
9. How do you know if you are sleep deprived?
10. What is obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA)?

Do you only dream of getting a good night's sleep?

Answers on the bottom of page two

Why is sleep so important?

We spend about one third of our lives asleep, but scientists only found out what was happening while we slept when the electroencephalograph was discovered. They also ran experiments to see how lack of sleep affected us and found how important sleep was to our ability to repair both our brains and our bodies.

We go through several stages of sleep in about 90 minutes cycles. These cycles are of light sleep, deep sleep and REM sleep. About half the night you will be in light sleep. Most deep sleep happens in the early part of the night with most of the REM sleep happening later on.

Deep Sleep

While we are in deep sleep, a network of channels in our brain called the glymphatic system opens up and pumps cerebrospinal fluid through it. This fluid washes away the toxic waste that has built up there during the day.

This is good news but unfortunately as we get older, we tend to get less deep sleep, so our brains are not as good at clearing out those toxins. Young people typically get a couple of hours deep sleep but people in their 60s are lucky if they get 30 mins. This matters because it is the accumulation of toxic proteins in the brain such as beta amyloid and tau that appears to drive Alzheimer's disease. There is a very clear link

between poor sleep and the development of dementia. As you get most of your deep sleep in the early part of the night it is a good idea to go to bed before midnight.
Deep sleep is also when your brain sorts out your memories and shifts the useful ones into deep storage. So a dramatic fall in the amount of deep sleep we get as we age might explain why our memories get worse as we get older.

REM sleep

REM sleep also helps tidy and organise our memories, but it has the additional role of helping resolve our emotional issues. When we are in REM, we revisit unpleasant memories and events but remain calm so we can process our emotions and defuse them.
REM sleep also makes us more creative. The age-old advice “to sleep on a problem” is spot on. If you write a problem down before you go to sleep, you will often find that you have suddenly come up with a solution by the next morning.

What can go wrong if you don’t get a good night’s sleep?

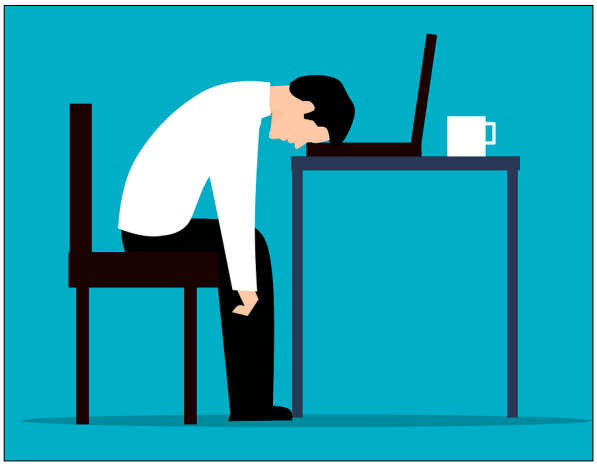
A bad night’s sleep not only affects our brain but also messes with our body. A meta-analysis carried out by King’s College London found that sleep deprived people eat on average an extra 385 calories per day.
This is because their hunger hormones go into overdrive and the areas of their brain associated with reward become more active. So, they are much more motivated to eat unhealthy foods like crisps and chocolate.
Lack of sleep makes you fatter but piling on extra fat, particularly around your neck and gut, also means you sleep worse. This increases your risk of getting sleep apnoea – a disorder that causes you to stop breathing hundreds of times a night and can lead to serious health consequences. It can also put you at risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, dementia, raised blood pressure, low mood and having a car crash.

How do I know if I am sleep deprived?

A simple way to check if you are sleep deprived is to lie down in a quiet room in the afternoon with a metal tray and spoon. You put the tray on the floor by your bed and hold the spoon in your hand with your arm hanging over the bed. Check the time as you lie down.
The idea is that as you fall asleep you will drop the spoon and the noise of it falling will wake you up. You then check the time again. If you fall asleep within 5 minutes you are seriously sleep deprived, within 10 minutes you are sleep deprived, 15 minutes you are borderline. More than that and you are OK.

How to measure your sleep

The best way to check whether you are getting enough sleep and of what type is to wear a good quality tracker. Not only will this tell you how long you have slept, it will measure your sleep efficiency.
Sleep efficiency is a measure of the amount of time you spend in bed actually asleep. You are heading for an efficiency of 85% but as you get older this could drop to 80%. An insomniac will probably spend around 70% of the night asleep.



If you would like to know more about this or any other health condition, talk to one of our trained staff.

Answers: Q1, About one third. Q2, To repair our bodies and brain. Q3, We pass through several stages of sleep. Q4, REM, deep and light. Q5, REM helps us process bad memories and experiences and become more creative. Q6, Our memories that are considered important are moved to deep storage and our brains cleaned. Q7, You are at increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, dementia, raised blood pressure and low mood and having a car crash. Q8, It’s a measurement of how much time you spend in bed. Q9, Lie down in a quiet room in the afternoon and see how quickly you fall asleep. Q10, A disorder that causes you to stop breathing hundreds of times a night.