



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Health Encourages Pennsylvanians to Get Enough Sleep

Nearly 40 Percent of Pennsylvanians Get Six or Fewer Hours of Sleep

Harrisburg, PA – For many people, the days that follow the beginning of daylight saving time, and losing an hour of sleep, can be difficult. The Wolf Administration encourages all Pennsylvanians to get an adequate amount of sleep each day, as it plays a vital role in an individual's mental and physical health, safety and quality of life.

“Getting the right amount of sleep is essential in keeping your body and mind in top physical condition,” Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine said. “The transition involved with daylight saving time can affect our internal clocks and go against our body's natural rhythms. Proper sleep helps to improve learning, heals our body and can help you function well throughout the day.”

[Studies have demonstrated](#) there is an increased risk of heart attacks, stroke and high blood pressure associated with sleep deprivation, and also an increase in accidents.

It is recommended by the National Institute of Health (NIH) that adults get 7-8 hours of sleep a day, and it is believed that you cannot make up for lost sleep, not even with napping. However, 38 percent of Pennsylvania adults [reported](#) averaging six or fewer hours of sleep in a 24-hour period.

Sleep is essential for children and teens and plays an integral part in allowing them to be alert and learn. It is recommended by the NIH that children ages 6-12 get 9-12 hours of sleep a day, and teens ages 13-18 get 8-10 hours a day.

Getting enough sleep is not only important for your daily activities, but also helps to improve your long-term health as well. Ongoing sleep deficiency can lead to an increased risk of heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke. Sleep deficiency also increases the risk of obesity. In addition, your immune system relies on sleep to fight off common infections, such as a cold.

If you are not getting enough sleep, there are several things you can do. The first is to make sure that you allow yourself enough time to sleep. Sleep can be one of the first things we push aside because of our busy schedules, and that usually ends up being detrimental in both the short-term and long-term. Ways to improve your sleep habits, according to the NIH, include:

- Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day. For children, have a set bedtime and a bedtime routine. Don't use the child's bedroom for timeouts or punishment;
- Trying to keep the same sleep schedule on weeknights and weekends. Staying up late and sleeping in late on weekends can disrupt your body clock's sleep–wake rhythm;
- Using the hour before bed for quiet time. Avoid strenuous exercise and bright artificial light, such as from a TV or computer screen. The light may signal the brain that it's time to be awake;
- Avoiding heavy and/or large meals within a couple hours of bedtime and avoiding alcoholic drinks before bed;
- Avoiding nicotine, such as cigarettes, and caffeine, including caffeinated soda, coffee, tea, and chocolate. Nicotine and caffeine are stimulants, and both substances can interfere with sleep. The effects of caffeine can last as long as eight hours. So, a cup of coffee in the late afternoon can make it hard for you to fall asleep at night;
- Spending time outside every day when possible and be physically active; and
- Keeping your bedroom quiet, cool, and dark.

For more information on sleep, and other health issues, visit the Department of Health website at www.health.pa.gov or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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