



Wellness News Network™

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Sleep Better Without TV

Presented by:

Introduction

How much sleep did you get last night? If you are like most people (yawn ...), it probably wasn't sufficient. But some surprising research might help you catch those elusive ZZZ's. If counting sheep and drinking warm milk are not working, studies suggest taking the TV out of the bedroom just might do the trick.

Lack of sleep is often linked to an unhealthy lifestyle and poor health status (BMC Public Health 2006;6:59). That is because the body does the majority of its "repair" work overnight. When this process is short changed, physical vulnerabilities result.

Chiropractors believe a good night's sleep is an integral part of the chiropractic lifestyle: a philosophy that focuses on preventing disease before it occurs.

One of the greatest contributors to sleeplessness — in addition to stress, work demands and family pressure — is television: particularly when it is located in the bedroom.

To learn more about a bedroom television's impact on insomnia and

other health issues, take a moment to read the following.

The Glow in the Dark

A nightlight can keep you from stubbing your toe in the dark. But the "night light" from a television screen can spark restless nights that jeopardize the immune system and cause daytime drowsiness.

In one study researchers noted the negative effect of ambient (surrounding) environmental lighting on sleep/wake patterns. The study included 17 patients with wrist-worn and free-standing light meters. Light sources included "soft glow" wall-mounted fixtures behind the beds.

The study explains that "disrupted sleep in hospitalized patients is widely reported, and ambient environmental lighting may be both a contributor to and a modifier of sleep/wake patterns." (Res Nurs Health 2007;30:120- 80)

Breast Cancer Link

Animal studies also link nighttime exposure to artificial light with the growth of breast tumors. The theory,

TRUE OR FALSE:

The body does the majority of its "repair" work overnight

ANSWER:
True

QUESTION:

Children between the ages of 9 and 10 should sleep at least:

- A) Eight hours per night
- B) Nine hours per night
- C) Six hours per night with an after-school nap

ANSWER:
B) Nine hours per night

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according to an article published in the peer-reviewed medical journal Cancer

Research is that light suppresses melatonin levels. Extended periods of nighttime darkness, however, boosted this key hormone's levels and substantially slowed tumor growth.

In another survey of 100 women who suffered from breast cancer and 100 healthy women, researchers detected a significance difference between the group of cancer patients and the healthy group in their proximity to large shopping centers, malls, and entertainment areas. These places generally make use of "blue" lighting, a type of ambient lighting, that, while more intense than light from a television, may be related to it.

Researcher Itai Kloog of the University of Haifa in Israel explained, "The body produces the hormone melatonin at night, when it is dark. This hormone delays the growth of cancerous cells. Therefore, any reduction of this hormone in the blood as a result of exposure to artificial lighting constitutes another factor putting women at risk of falling ill with breast cancer."

The University of Haifa researcher warns against artificial light trickling into the bedroom all night from outside. He advises shutting unnecessary house lights at night and to be careful not to fall asleep in front of a television that is left on. Deserted areas of the city, like an industrial area, should be blacked out at night, he feels.

That is why it's important to block out as much ambient light as possible —

not only from glaring television screens but illuminated clocks and, in children's bedrooms, glow-in-the-dark ceiling decorations. According to a study published in the European Journal of Cancer Prevention, blocking out the light "may prevent the suppression of melatonin, which could help to prevent cancer."

TVs in Children's Bedrooms

It's no surprise that children need more sleep — quality, uninterrupted ZZZ's — than adults. But just how much is enough? Many experts suggest the following:

- 0 to 2 months: 15 to 18 hours
- 2 to 12 months: 14 to 15 hours
- 1 to 3 years: 12 to 14 hours
- 3 to 5 years: 11 to 13 hours
- 5 to 12 years: 10 to 11 hours

These recommendations, unfortunately, are largely unheeded.

Sweet Dreams

Sleep is simply too important to let anything compromise its remarkably restorative powers.

If you suffer from sleep disturbances, try giving your bedroom television the boot. And, make sure to schedule an appointment for a chiropractic evaluation focused on uncovering any other "hidden" causes of your insomnia.

Quote to Inspire

"Without enough sleep, we all become tall two-year-olds."

— JoJo Jensen

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