

What is Better Sleep Month?

The aim of Better Sleep Month is to encourage people to establish better sleeping patterns. Refreshing sleep is important to stay healthy. Better Sleep Month is supported by the Better Sleep Council (BSC), which aims to raise awareness about the benefits of better sleep and how poor sleep can disrupt our lives. As with diet and exercise, sleep plays a significant role in our physical, emotional, and mental health.

Signs and symptoms of sleep deficiency

Sleep deficiency can cause you to feel very tired during the day. You may not feel refreshed and alert when you wake up. Sleep deficiency also can interfere with work, school, driving, and social functioning. How sleepy you feel during the day can help you figure out whether you're having symptoms of problem sleepiness. You might be sleep deficient if you often feel like you could doze off while:

- Sitting and reading or watching TV
- Sitting still in a public place, such as a movie theater, meeting, or classroom
- Riding in a car for an hour without stopping
- Sitting and talking to someone
- Sitting quietly after lunch
- Sitting in traffic for a few minutes

Consequences of poor sleep

Lack of sleep can lead to an increase in blood pressure and stress hormone production. The body can become stressed when it does not get enough sleep. The consequences of poor sleep include reduced concentration, mood swings, irritability, stress, and a weakened immune system. The release of stress hormones can also make it harder to sleep, and start an unhealthy sleep cycle. In severe cases, poor sleep may be linked to serious problems including narcolepsy, insomnia, restless leg syndrome, and sleep apnea.

Apps for your smartphone

- [Noisli](#)
- [Pzizz Sleep](#)
- [Sleep Genius](#)
- [Sleep Time+](#)

Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Martin Hickey, MD**, NMHC's Chief Executive Officer. Healthy sleep habits can make a big difference in your quality of life. Having healthy sleep habits is often referred to as having good sleep hygiene. Try to keep the following sleep practices on a consistent basis:

1. Stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and wakeup time, even on the weekends.
2. Practice a relaxing bedtime ritual.
3. If you have trouble sleeping, avoid naps, especially in the afternoon.
4. Exercise daily. Vigorous exercise is best, but even light exercise is better than no activity.
5. Evaluate your room. Design your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep.
6. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows. Make sure your mattress is comfortable and supportive.
7. Avoid large meals before bed.
8. Be sure to get the recommended amount of sleep for your age group.

If you're still having trouble sleeping, don't hesitate to speak with your doctor or to find a sleep professional. You may also benefit from recording your sleep in a sleep diary to help you better evaluate common patterns or issues you may see with your sleep or sleeping habits.

Additional resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#)
- [National Sleep Foundation](#)
- [The Better Sleep Council](#)