

# Sleep Needs

The recommendation that we need eight hours of sleep to function effectively during the day is not true for all. Many adults can't sleep eight hours a night, and attempts to do so leads to increased wakefulness in bed.

A rule of thumb: If you wake up feeling refreshed, and you don't feel sleepy during the day, you are getting enough sleep.

If you have an occasional night of poor sleep, you probably will need to sleep more the next night to make up for it.

The amount of sleep that you need depends on a number of factors, including your genetic make-up; the amount of exercise you get; your daily activities; your age; and the quality of your sleep.

Following are some guidelines on how much sleep you or your loved ones might need:

Group	Amount of Sleep Needed
Infants	About 16 hours per day of sleep
Babies and toddlers	From 6 months to 3 years: between 10 and 14 hours per day. Young children generally get their sleep from a combination of nighttime sleep and naps. See, especially for tips on shaping nighttime awakenings in young children.
Ages 3 to 6:	between 10 and 12 hours of sleep
Ages 6 to 9:	about 10 hours of sleep
Ages 9 to 12:	about 9 hours of sleep
Teenagers:	About 9 hours of sleep per night. Teens have trouble getting enough sleep not only because of their busy schedules, but also because they are biologically programmed to want to stay up later and sleep later in the morning, which usually doesn't mesh with school schedules.
Adults	For most adults, 7 to 8 hours a night appears to be the best amount of sleep, although some people may need as few as 5 hours or as many as 10 hours of sleep each night.
Older adults	Current thought is that older adults need as much, if not more, sleep than middle-aged adults. Taking a midday nap may help.
Pregnant women	During pregnancy, women may need a few more hours of sleep per night.

