Sleep

Why it Matters

- How and when we sleep is controlled by hormones released in a 24-hour cycle; its timing is set by outside cues. Patterns of meals, exercise and social interactions contribute to the sleep/wake cycle and changes in these cues can disrupt sleep.
- With too little sleep, the body accumulates a “sleep debt.” Eventually this debt must be paid, even if it means falling asleep at a bad time - such as while driving a car.
- Not getting enough sleep means:
  - Increased irritability
  - Decreased motivation, memory, concentration and/or creativity
  - Increased proneness to injury
  - Greater likelihood of problems such as upset stomach or headaches

What MSU students say and do

- 51% Of MSU students reported experiencing sleep difficulties, and 19% reported it as an impediment to their academic performance.
- 38% Of MSU students reported that they felt tired, dragged out, or sleepy 4 or more days in the previous week.

When to Get Help

See a health care provider if:

- **Sleep problems interfere** with school, work, or relationships with friends or family.
- **You use sleeping pills to make yourself sleep** or amphetamines to keep you alert.
- **You have depression, chronic anxiety, pain, or a change in medication.** A provider can give you information and help with these possible causes of sleep problems.
- **You snore heavily or stop breathing at intervals during the night** (often starting again with a gasp). You may have sleep apnea, which results from a blocked or partly blocked airway.

What you can do

- At times, you can’t avoid getting too little sleep - but there are things you can do to help:
  - **Nap during the day** - if you know you’ll be up late, a nap beforehand helps reduce sleep loss problems.
  - **Reduce stress** - exercise regularly & do things that relax you.
  - **Set your sleep-wake schedule** - as much as possible, keep to a regular schedule for meals, bedtime, and waking up.
  - **Avoid substances that disrupt sleep** - caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine can all make sleep more difficult.

- 24% Of MSU students reported that sleep difficulties were traumatic/very difficult to handle in the past year.
- 20% Of MSU students reported having an extremely hard time falling asleep 3 or more days in the previous week.

Sleep Resources

MSU Counseling Center: Short-term individual counseling, group counseling, substance abuse assessment/services, and prevention education. counseling.msu.edu

Student Health Services: A wide variety of health care services are available to MSU students year round at 5 different locations on campus. olin.msu.edu

Recreational Sports and Fitness Services: Fitness classes, club and intramural sports, several locations on campus. recsports.msu.edu

Health Education: A wide array of campus and classroom educational programs, health promotion campaigns, individualized educational programs, and other health promotion strategies. olin.msu.edu/healthed

---

The data in this document were obtained from the 2014 National College Health Assessment (NCHAM) through Student Health Services at Olin Health Center’s membership in the American College Health Association (ACHA). For the full MSU NCHAM report, please visit http://spor.msu.edu/MSU/ACHA_2014_Report.pdf