Beds for Beauty

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Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol17/iss7/4
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by Ruth Dahlberg

WHEN the alarm buzzes in the morning do you awaken "Feelin' Like a Million" or is crawling out of bed the hardest task of the day? My curiosity regarding this sleepy subject led me to search for a definition of sleep. Sleep is a natural, temporary state during which there is a partial cessation of consciousness, body processes are slower, and recuperation of the body takes place.

There is a general tendency to deeper sleep in the early hours of the evening; however, this varies with different individuals on different nights.

Many people, including Iowa State coeds, have wished that it were not necessary to take time out for sleep. Many a person has wished at some time that he or she could work efficiently on fewer hours of sleep.

Why do we require sleep? Psychologists have made investigations proving conclusively that we cannot get along without it. They tell us that sleep is more essential than nourishment to our well-being. Sleep is a universal phenomenon. Striking correlations have been found between insufficient sleep on the one hand and poor general health, fatigue, headaches, nervousness and inadequacy in school work on the other.

Doctors and beauty specialists have been telling us for some time that there is a direct connection between good sleep and good looks. Restful sleep contributes to health, beauty, and a sunny disposition. Sleeping is a good way to avoid lines around the mouth and big dark circles under the eyes.

The amount of sleep needed varies with the individual. For some adults seven hours is sufficient while others require eight and nine hours each night. The amount of sleep you need varies with your physical activity and emotional strain. Doctors usually specify eight to nine hours of sleep a night for college students.

If your sleep requirements are abnormally high or low, there may be some underlying cause which should be determined by a medical examination. The chief danger lies in the fact that we may not realize the results of loss of sleep which may lead ultimately to a nervous breakdown. It is possible to get rest without actually going to sleep. Ten or fifteen minutes of complete rest and relaxation is an excellent practice.

Physical aids that are conducive to restful sleep include a well ventilated room with plenty of fresh air; a good bed; light, warm coverlets; a low but not too soft pillow; and shades to protect the eyes from light, because light shines through the eyelids when they are closed.

It is important that the coverlets used be warm enough and yet light in weight. Many people awaken physically tired because of the effort expended in holding up the heavy covers all night long.

Other factors may cause sleep problems. Worry leads in the list of reasons for sleeplessness. Nerves, overwork and excessive fatigue, indigestion, stimulants and noise are other causes.

It is important that we establish regularity in our sleeping habits. A definite time for retiring conditions the body to sleep response.

The food eaten at the evening meal sometimes causes sleeplessness. If sleeping troubles originate with the stomach, practice restraint and eat a nourishing but simple evening meal. For adults a light snack at 10:30 p.m. has been conducive to the best sleep. Hot milk and hot milk drinks have a soothing effect.

Mental discomfort or excitement is always the enemy of sleep. We have all been told not to "climb our mountains the night before the ascent is scheduled." Worrying about the physics or chemistry examination to be taken the next day will not help matters. If you are too worried to sleep, then get up immediately and do something about the thing that is worrying you! Conserve your strength and don't look ahead for troubles that may never arrive.

Self pity is another sleep destroyer. Don't pity yourself because you cannot go off to sweet dreamland immediately. Drowsiness, if pursued too vigorously, is very elusive. A few minutes of deep breathing in front of an open window will cool off both mind and body. Many people keep a few books that are conducive to mental repose at the bedside. Detective or adventure stories are excluded. A brief period of not too vigorous physical exercise is sometimes beneficial, and hair brushing is good for a taut feeling at the neck.

A neutral bath, one which is neither too hot or too cold, is a pleasant bedtime ritual. Don't hurry with the bath, rather be lazy and take it leisurely and slowly. Sweet-smelling bath salts add luxury. A rubber pillow or bath towel on which to rest the head gives a feeling of ease.

While in the tub lather cream generously on your face. Then try stretching the toes and fingers—stretch and relax. When the sandman is coming, relax. When the sandman is coming, try saying to yourself, "I don't care whether I go to sleep or not."

Above all, don't take sedatives to induce sleep unless you do so with a physician's consent.

Dark and Light

When God put the sun to bed
He pulled a blue and rose coverlet over its head.

Then across the sky He pulled a worn, black curtain.

But He forgot to turn out His light—
I saw it burning through the holes 'til very late last night.

—by Ronny Romningen