

SLEEP ON THIS

O&A

Improve Your Grades With Sleep

By Cassie Chung

May is designated “Better Sleep Month”, a perfect opportunity for sleep-deprived college students to develop better sleep habits. We got some advice from Dr. Clete Kushida about how to develop good sleep habits in college.

Have you seen any rapid increase in sleep deprivation among college students in these 10 years?

Students have much more stress these days, especially in school. And stress is related to the quality of sleep. If they have stress, it can affect their sleep and as a result of sleep deprivation.

What are the different stages of sleep?

There are five stages of sleep, including four stages in non-REM sleep, and the last stage – REM sleep. Stage 3 and stage 4 are where deep sleep takes place; the brain works slowest among these five stages and there is no eye movement or muscle activity. REM sleep is your dream stage, the stage when the brain processes, and orders all of the thoughts and things we see in the day.

How can it make an impact if we don't get enough sleep in these five stages of sleep?

Mostly, it is all about the adequate amount of sleep. Basically the amount of sleep that you need is the amount of necessary to prevent you from being sleepy or drowsy during the daytime. So you know, the most important thing is try to get adequate amount of sleep as much as possible, a standardized bedtime and awakening time, and to prevent yourself from becoming drowsy.

What are the indicators or symptoms of sleep deprivation?

Basically, it would cause drowsiness, and it would also be micro-sleep, which is some irresistible urges to fall asleep, particularly when you

are in class. In addition, it would also be often mood changes, so that the people, who have irritability, sometimes have a depressed mood or anxiety. But really, they would have increases in the attention vigilance, learning and memory, and also higher order function.

Is taking nap a healthy habit?

No. Only taking a nap when you can't function. In general, you should avoid naps because it will make you more difficult to fall asleep at night. One thing is you should get adequate amount of sleep; keeping a very consistent bedtime and awakening time.

The only time you should nap if you are about to get behind the wheel of a car, or if you take a nap at the same time every day, it is not so bad. But in general, you should try to avoid naps.

“Students may perform better if they get more sleep before and during exam week”? Is this correct?

Whether insomnia appears or not, it is important to get sleep. The best thing in terms of cognitive function is to get adequate amount of sleep, to get as much as possible. Sleep loss has been shown to impair your ability to concentrate.

What are the criteria for getting good quality sleep?

For students, regarding to the massive amount of schoolwork and exam, the most important thing is to try getting a very consistent bedtime and awakening time, at least eight hours for this age group. You can try to maximize the sleep amount, have bright light in the morning within five minutes of getting up, or about 30 minutes, can help synchronize your body clock. e

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