

[IMAGE]

Sleep and Heart Health

By Editorial Staff

Sleep is increasingly recognized as an important factor in heart health – so much so that the American Heart Association (AHA) recently added healthy sleep as an eighth element of its "Life's Essential 8" checklist for optimizing cardiovascular health. Getting good sleep is critical because only about 20 percent of people in the U.S. currently have optimal heart health.

Data on 23,000-plus U.S. adults (ages 20-79) and children (ages 2-19), gathered via national surveys from 2013-2018, show 80 percent have below-optimal cardiovascular health. Poor sleep may be a big reason why; but it's not the only reason. The "Life's Essential 8" checklist includes sleep duration and seven other components of heart health:

- Diet
- Physical activity
- Nicotine exposure
- Body mass index
- Blood lipids
- Blood glucose
- Blood pressure

The eight checklist items are scored individually, with a total possible score of 100. A score of 80 or higher indicates high heart health; below 50 indicates low heart health. In the data analysis, published in the research journal *Circulation* (a publication of the AHA), the vast majority of scores were in the moderate (50-79) to low range.

baby sleeping - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Now back to sleep, the newest addition to the heart-health checklist. Why does sleep matter when it comes to heart health? Per the AHA president in an association media release, "The new metric of sleep duration reflects the latest research findings: sleep impacts overall health, and people who have healthier sleep patterns manage health factors such as weight, blood pressure or risk for Type 2 diabetes more effectively."

Keep in mind that healthy sleep isn't just about how long you sleep; it's also about quality of sleep. If you wake up tired and sluggish, your sleep quality needs help. If you toss and turn all night, or wake up repeatedly, your sleep quality needs help. Your doctor can tell you more about how important sleep is to your overall health and suggest ways to ensure a good night's sleep every night (or at least more nights than you're enjoying currently).

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=3043&no_paginate=true&no_b=true