

[IMAGE]

Get in Rhythm With a Good Night's Sleep

The circadian rhythm, the body's natural clock that keeps us on regular 24-hour day/night cycles, is the primary component that determines our sleeping patterns, including the quality and quantity of our sleep. When the circadian rhythm is disrupted due to changing time zones or work schedules, it can result in sleep deprivation, which, if not corrected, can lead to depression and other serious health problems - even cancer, according to a recent study.

Researchers examined the relationship between sleep and cancer, and found that a lack of sleep can cause a hormonal imbalance in the body - not a good thing, since, according to the study, reduced levels of some hormones, such as melatonin and oestrogen, can stimulate tumor growth. Additionally, a disrupted circadian cycle can result in a reduction of cortisol, a stress hormone that aids the immune system in fighting off cancer-causing cells.

According to the researchers, this study helps pave the way for understanding psychosocial factors, including diet and exercise, and their effects on cancer.

Whether cancer is an immediate concern or not, this study clearly shows that the benefits sleep are wide-reaching, and that the body as a whole needs sleep to stay healthy. To learn more about the many paths to wellness, visit www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/general/wellness/index.html.

Reference:

Sephton S, Spiegel D. Circadian disruption in cancer: a neuroendocrine-immune pathway from stress to disease? *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* (Oct. 2003):17(5), pp 321-328.

Page printed from:

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