



From the CDC: 1 in 3 adults sleep less than 7 hours

If you're not getting enough sleep and find yourself waking up tired on a daily basis, you're not alone. More than one-third of U.S. adults' average less than 7 hours of sleep per night, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC survey found that lack of sleep is causing problems during the daytime. In one survey, 38% of people said they'd unintentionally dozed off during the day at least once in the previous month. Even more alarming, 5% said they'd nodded off or had actually fallen asleep while driving.

"If you don't get enough sleep, it definitely impacts your functioning, your memory, and response time." As stated by Lela McKnight-Eily, PhD, one of the authors of the report and an epidemiologist and clinical psychologist with the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

A second survey confirmed that nearly one-quarter of the people who reported getting less than 7 hours had difficulty concentrating during the day, and nearly one-fifth had trouble remembering things. Sleeping less than 7 hours can interfere with everyday tasks, "lots of things you do every day and that you take for granted," says Anne Wheaton, a postdoctoral research fellow at the CDC who co-authored the report.

But that ideal spot is harder to come by in this current day. Between 1985 and 2009, the percentage of people who slept less than seven hours has shot up from 23% to 35%, a striking increase that the researchers say is due in part to workforce changes and new technology—such as the smart phones and laptops that keep us connected at all hours.

Among the other notable findings in the report:

- People over age 65 were more likely than younger adults to sleep 7 hours or more, improving physical abilities
- Non-Hispanic whites (35%) were more likely than blacks (48%) to get at least 7 hours of sleep
- When sleeping less than 7 hours, women are more likely than men to experience trouble with everyday activities, including preventing falls

"We need to start seeing sleep as a central part of health, not a luxury," McKnight-Eily said.

"The lack of sleep can impact day-to-day function and mortality, including personal balance and gait."