

# Living Well with AIMGA

## VOL. 3: SLEEP YOURSELF WELL!



Sleep plays a vital role in our overall health; it allows our bodies to refuel and recharge physically and mentally and makes us feel both energized and rested when we wake up each day. With World Sleep Day and Safe Sleep Week both taking place this month, Living Well with AIMGA's March newsletter focuses on "sleeping yourself well" to highlight the importance of sleep and its impact on both your body and mind. A sufficient amount of sleep has been shown to be linked with not only our daily functioning and physical health (e.g., improved immunity, cardiovascular health, and lower overall mortality), but also our mental health, emotions, memory retention, and productivity. This content shares valuable and interesting information related to the science behind sleep, sleep disorders, and how to create and support healthy sleep routines and patterns so that you, too, can sleep yourself well!

### TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

[Check out this neat video](#) to learn more about the tips shared below: **6 Tips for Better Sleep**

- 1 **Regularity:** keep a consistent sleep/wake schedule
- 2 **Cool Temperature** – keep it cool in your sleep space (~18 degrees Celsius)
- 3 **Darkness:** darkness helps trigger melatonin release, which helps regulate the healthy timing of sleep
- 4 **Walk it out:** don't stay in bed awake for long periods of time, if 25 min goes by and you can't fall asleep or get back to sleep after 25 min, get out of bed and go do something different; you need to break the association of bed with wakefulness – if you do this, the brain will relearn the association that the bed is a place for sleep
- 5 **Avoid Caffeine and Alcohol:** Avoid caffeine and alcohol in afternoon/evenings
- 6 **Wind down routine:** in the last hour or half hour before bed, do something relaxing and stick to this routine

**NOTE:** If you are suffering from a sleep disorder, such as insomnia or sleep apnea, you should seek a medical professional to determine next steps, as these tips may not help you.



### HEALTH REMINDERS!

- **Maintain a safe living environment for individuals who sleepwalk** by keeping sharp objects or weapons locked away and out of reach; closing and latching doors and windows, etc.
- **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is preventable.** To reduce the risk of SIDS: promote back sleeping including nightly sleeping and naps; avoid smoking, alcohol, and drugs during pregnancy; etc. ([Baby's Breath, 2016](#))
- **Melatonin** is a hormone that facilitates sleep onset; your brain produces melatonin in response to darkness and helps with your circadian rhythms. Profound research shows melatonin has small benefits for sleep onset but little evidence shows it is useful for sleep maintenance.
- **Magnesium** may help to relax muscles and nerve function and maintain levels of GABA (or gamma-aminobutyric acid), a neurotransmitter that is responsible for "turning off" wakefulness. It helps people fall asleep faster, stay asleep longer, reduce nighttime awakenings, and increase theory levels of naturally circulating [melatonin](#).

## RED FLAGS

- If working shift work and awake for over 15 hours, CAB HOME or get a ride if you are feeling sleepy.
- Occasional episodes of sleep walking aren't usually a concern, but if it is occurring quite often (1-2 times a week) and/or leading to dangerous behaviours or injury, it's best to consult your doctor ([Mayo Clinic, 2017](#)).
- The best way to stay on top of your sleep health is to watch out for sleep red flags that may mean you need to adjust the length or quality of your sleep. **Here are five quick red flags to look out for:**
  - 1** You keep pressing snooze on your alarm every morning: If you press snooze every single morning or don't have the energy to leave your bed, you might need to go to sleep earlier or tailor your sleep schedule.
  - 2** You always wake up tired, no matter how much you sleep: If you're constantly exhausted, no matter how many hours of sleep you get. Oversleeping is often an

indicator that your body is worn down, or it may even indicate that your immune system is fighting off an illness. When you're getting a consistent 8+ hours of sleep every night, and it still isn't enough, then it's likely time to talk to your doctor about it.

- 3** You rely on coffee to get through the day: Coffee can be good for your heart health (Harvard Health, 2020), but when you start to depend on coffee or other caffeinated beverages just to stay awake, this is problematic and it's time to pay more attention to your sleep cycle.
- 4** You need to take naps to keep your energy levels up: If you're taking multiple naps throughout the day, then your current sleep schedule likely isn't doing it for you.
- 5** You wake up with a sore throat, dry mouth, or headache: If you're constantly waking up with these symptoms, it may be a sign you're a chronic snorer, or you might have sleep apnea.

**Sources:** [Government of Canada, 2021](#); [Mayo Clinic, 2017](#)

## DID YOU KNOW?



AIMGA experts are available to speak to your organization on this topic.

Book your presentation today by emailing [drew@aimga.ca](mailto:drew@aimga.ca)

For more information, check out the full version of the "Living Well With AIMGA" Newsletter by scanning the QR code below with your phone!

