Sleep is defined as a state of rest characterized by limited bodily activity and an unconscious state. There are many benefits of sleep:

- Physiological Repair
- Immunity
- Supports productivity and performance
- Memory processing
- Maintenance of healthy body weight
- Decreases stress and improves mood

Sleep and Traumatic Brain Injury

If you or a loved one has a TBI, you already know that good sleep can be very challenging. Unfortunately, poor sleep is both common and problematic for TBI survivors. It can:

- Lead to poorer performance on cognitive tests following the TBI
- Lead to chronic fatigue
- Lead to depression and anxiety

Did You Know?

Sleep problems following a TBI are likely caused by:

- Imbalance of sleep-related hormones
- Damage to the sleep centers of the brain
- Side-effect of another consequence of the TBI, like depression or anxiety

Sleep For Caregivers

Up to 76% of caregivers of TBI survivors reported poor sleep quality. This was especially true for female caregivers. The most common causes involved night-time wakenings and hyper-alertness; cumulative sleep loss; napping in the day to “catch up,” and stress and anxiety.

Consequences Of Poor Sleep

- Impaired Immunity
- Difficulty concentrating, learning, and remembering
- Irritability and mood swings
- Increased risk for chronic illness
- Increased risk for physical injury

Could Affect Your Ability To

- Physically care for your loved one
- Problem solve when faced with a difficult care situation
- Safely prepare and administer medications without distraction
- Financially provide for both your loved one and yourself if you develop a chronic illness
Strategies For Improving Sleep

Ask For Help!

Be sure to share with your loved one’s doctor the issues he/she is having with sleep and with your own doctor if you are having issues with sleep.

Develop A Good Sleep Hygiene Routine!

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule - Get up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Set a bedtime that is early enough to give you at least 7 hours of sleep.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Limit daytime naps and if you must nap, set an alarm to keep it short.
- Don’t eat large meals before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet; avoid caffeine and alcohol in the late afternoon and evening.
- Reduce fluid intake before bedtime.

Develop A Good Sleep Hygiene Environment!

- Use your bed only for sleep and sex.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing.
- Keep the room between 60-70 degrees.
- Limit exposure to bright light in the evenings.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

Use Over-the-Counter sleep aids with caution, and only after consulting with your doctor!

Consider Sleep in context! Sleep is only ONE part of the puzzle!

*The information contained on this information sheet is provided courtesy the research and work of Dr. Rachael Mumbower, PhD, RN

Please visit www.ahif.org or call the AHIF office at (800) 433-8002 to confirm the appropriate AHIF Resource Coordinator for your location.