

Good night, **sleep** tight

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TIRED of staring at your ceiling in the dark, tossing and turning all night? You are not alone.



A recent survey revealed that nine out of 10 Malaysians suffer from one or more sleeping problems in their lifetimes.

Blame it on stress, which keeps your mind active, but there are many other factors that may also disrupt your slumber.

These include an irregular sleep schedule, poor sleeping habits, illnesses and pain, certain medications and sleep disorders.

Are you getting enough sleep?

You spend about a third of your life sleeping.

A good night's sleep is not a luxury, it is a necessity – it allows your body and mind to recharge and recover from exertion.

How much sleep do you really need? The average adult needs between seven and nine hours of snooze a day.

Why is sleep important?

There's nothing like a restful night's sleep, and waking up energised and ready to tackle the day.

Here are eight reasons why you should call it an early night:

- Boosts concentration
- Improves athletic performance
- Promotes skin health
- Enhances mood
- Relieves stress
- Regulates blood pressure
- Strengthens immunity
- Maintains healthy weight

What are the effects of sleep deprivation?

A few hours of sleep loss each night puts a major damper on your quality of life beyond daytime drowsiness.

Regularly skimping on sleep can have cumulative impacts, which can be far more severe than you thought.

It can interfere with your cognitive abilities and eventually cause reduced concentration, impaired memory and anxiety.

Being sleep-deprived will put you at an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, obesity and diabetes.

How to sleep better?

Synthetic sleeping pills may seem like a quick band-aid.

They can help you fall asleep but can cause several side effects, including prolonged drowsiness the next day, nausea and dry mouth.

Other risks include drug dependence, withdrawal symptoms and rebound insomnia.

For a sustainable solution, consider trying herbal remedies to calm your racing thoughts and ease into a restful sleep.

Unlike synthetic pills, these herbs are non-habit forming and do not cause any unpleasant side effects.

Sedating herbs like Chinese dates, passion flower, hop and valerian root have been used since ancient times to promote tranquillity and improve sleep.

These herbs work by increasing the levels and activity of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a chemical messenger, which reduces the activity of the neurons in the brain and central nervous system, helping your body and mind to relax and sleep.

Together, they may help you fall asleep faster, reduce night-time awakenings and sleep for longer.

Getting adequate sleep is essential for your health and well-being.

Nonetheless, the quality of your sleep is just as important. Sleep better and start each day afresh and energised.