

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP HYGIENE PRACTICES

The Midweek Sun · 24 Apr 2024 · 24 · With DAVID SIDNEY MANGWEGAPE dsmangwegape@gmail.com FACEBOOK; David Sidney Mangwegape

Despite a significant prevalence of sleep disorders and/or problems with sleep, sleep hygiene is often overlooked in our society. Poor sleep hygiene can lead to various sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnoea, and restless leg syndrome, as well as exacerbate existing health conditions like anxiety and depression; hence sleep hygiene comes handy as the cornerstone of maintaining optimal physical and mental health. Over the past few weeks, we discussed several sleep disorders and we will this week finalise it by discussing the several strategies for sleep hygiene.



Sleep hygiene can be referred to as the set of behaviours and environmental factors that influence the quality and quantity of sleep. Furthermore, it encompasses a set of practices and habits that promote quality sleep, cognitive function and emotional well-being.

Sleep hygiene is built around a consistent sleep schedule which can be facilitated by going to bed and waking up at the same time even on weekends. Creating a relaxing bedtime routine like listening to soothing music, reading and practicing relaxation techniques such as meditation or deep breathing exercises, is perfect for aiding sleep.

A conducive sleep environment is essential for promoting restful sleep hence the bedroom should be quiet, cool and dark as that aids and optimises sleep. It may be worthwhile to also ensure comfortable mattress and pillows for proper spinal alignment.

Avoiding caffeine, nicotine, and stimulating activities close to bedtime can help facilitate the perfect transition to sleep. Additionally, the light emitted by electronic devices such as smartphones and computers can disturb the sleep-wake patterns. Limiting screen time at least an hour before bedtime can also promote better sleep quality.

Essentially, incorporating regular physical activity, limiting daytime napping and the above highlighted tips can be used by anyone just to facilitate their sleep. Individuals are encouraged to seek help in cases whereby sleep problems interfere with their day to day functioning.

If despite practicing good sleep hygiene, sleep problems persist, it may be indicative of an underlying sleep disorder or other medical condition hence the need to consult a healthcare professional.

Prioritizing sleep hygiene is essential for achieving restorative and rejuvenated sleep.

By adopting healthy sleep habits and creating a conducive sleep environment, individuals can optimize their sleep quality and overall well-being which is the foundation of positive physical and mental health.