

THE BEST RX FOR HAPPINESS: GET MORE SLEEP! zzzzzzz....

Everyone knows lack of sleep can make you grumpy. It also can cause serious health problems such as heart disease, heart attack, irregular heartbeat, stroke, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Being sleep deprived can contribute to depression as well.

Insomnia, which is the most common sleep disorder, also has the strongest link to depression. People who suffered from insomnia were five times more likely to develop depression. The lack of ability to fall asleep is most often one of the first signs of depression.

Depression and insomnia combine to form a vicious cycle. Depression makes it more difficult to sleep, and loss of sleep aggravates depression. The good news is that treating insomnia can also help with the symptoms of depression.

Studies show that incorporating the following into your sleep habits can improve insomnia:

- Try to go to bed at the same time each night and get up the same time each morning
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid alcohol and large meals before bedtime
- Try not to nap during the day
- Take a warm bath before bed
- Exercise regularly
- Do not use electronics or watch TV approximately an hour before bedtime
- Read or engage in a quiet, relaxing activity
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool
- If your mattress set is more than seven years old, it may be time to replace them, especially if you notice you sleep better elsewhere

Your physician may also prescribe the use of a melatonin supplement to help you fall asleep. Melatonin is a hormone that helps regulate sleep and wakefulness.

Breaking the no sleep or poor sleep cycle can be challenging, but the improvements to mind and body are well worth the effort.

(Posted 10/18/17)