

December 2009 *LifeSolutions* Corner

“I am having a hard time sleeping. I’m not depressed or anxious, but I can’t seem to shut off my brain when I go to bed. Can *LifeSolutions* help? “

Yes...*LifeSolutions* can help you with questions or concerns about sleep, either by phone or in person.

- ◆ We will examine what may be interfering with your sleep.
- ◆ We can make suggestions which may improve the quality and quantity of your sleep.
- ◆ We can recommend help articles and tips on our website for you to review (and even direct you to books written by sleep specialists both from UPMC and elsewhere).
- ◆ If you want to consult with a sleep specialist, we can suggest experts and help to arrange referrals.
- ◆ And remember, our consultation is free!

There are a lot of common sayings about sleep-- some true, some false. Do you know which of the following statements are true?

1. “If I miss out on sleep during the week, I can catch up on the weekend by sleeping longer.”
2. “Taking a nap before dinner will help me get a good night’s sleep.”
3. “Going to bed about the same time each night and getting up the same time each day helps me sleep better.”
4. “Having a beer or a glass of wine in the evening helps me sleep better.”
5. “Getting enough sleep is important because sleep allows my brain and body to ‘slow down’.”
6. “I need less sleep as I get older.”

Now check your answers with the true answers below:

1. **False.** Sleeping longer on weekends may help, but that doesn’t fully make up for lack of sleep during the week, nor does it help you function better during the day.
2. **False.** Naps can help, but if you take a nap late in the afternoon (after 3 pm), it is often harder to fall asleep at night.
3. **True.** Your body does get used to a certain rhythm of waking and sleeping when you get up and go to bed about the same time each night, and that rhythm can be helpful.
4. **False.** You may fall asleep easier (or even pass out), but alcohol actually interferes with deep sleep and REM sleep, so you won’t sleep as well. The next morning you may also find yourself feeling very fatigued.
5. **False.** Sleep is important for your body, but some functions actually become more active during sleep.
6. **False.** Your brain and body keep working while you sleep for as long as you live, repairing and building new connections and brain pathways that help you to learn, remember, and solve problems.

For more information and assistance, call *LifeSolutions* at 1.800.647.3327 or visit us on the web at lifesolutionsforyou.com.

Source: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf

