

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

Acharya Balkrishna

The day and night together make 24 hours. The routine of night is included in the daily routine. After working for the entire day, the body requires proper rest at night. Sleep is the action of the night, which is most important, so let me first talk about sleep.

Sleep

We all are aware that proper sleep is necessary in order to keep the body healthy and fresh. The body and mind are not so active after working for whole day and then the man feels like sleeping or taking proper rest. The stage when the mind loses the connection from the body is the inactive stage and is known as sleep. In this stage the man breathes normally and the blood circulation continues normally. All other actions are terminated during this stage. The body uses very less energy and the remaining energy makes the body energetic and strong. That is why we feel more fresh and energetic after a sound sleep.

Night is convenient for sleep, because at night the body is free from phlegm and mind is free from Tamas or anger. During night the darkness and cold is more compared to daytime, and hence the man enjoys sound sleep.

The sleep is of two types:

1. **Dream state:** A man dreams while sleeping. Unconscious mind is full of different types of conditions, that is why the sleep cannot be sound or does not give complete rest.
2. **Sleep state:** In this state the mind is inactive. This state makes the mind healthy and fresh, whereas the sleep in dream state does not give rest and freshness to the body.

The body should be physically tired and the mind should be worrisome in order to enjoy undisturbed sleep. That means mind is free from anger, unhappiness, thoughts and mental disturbance. A person who suf-

fers from sleeplessness suffers from many mental and physical disorders.

Reasons for sleeplessness:

- Mental disturbances, such as, fear, worries, anger or unhappiness.
- Too much of physical exercises, activity or tiredness.
- Excessive blood circulation (could be due to various reasons)
- Keeping stomach empty for more time.
- Smoking
- Uncomfortable bed and place.
- Predominance of Tamas quality and less of satva quality.
- Old age, some diseases occurring due to gastric problem, pain and any other disease.
- Vomiting or motions, which causes headache.
- Habituated to less hours of sleep (normally)

Medication:

To avoid sleeplessness, following methods can be followed:

- Body massage or hot water bath.
- Oily food, curd rice, or by consuming milk.
- Being mentally happy.
- Using balms or gels for eyes, head and face which gives relief.
- A comfortable bed to sleep and a quiet place.
- Fragrant surroundings or by smelling perfume.

Avoid sleeping in the daytime:

Sleeping in the daytime increases phlegm and pitta in the body which makes the body lethargic and is not good for health. Sleeping in the daytime increases many diseases, like severe jaundice, headache, body weight,

body pain, indigestion, feeling of phlegm accumulation, swelling, dislike of food, vomiting or vomiting sensation, swelling in nose, migraine, sheeta pitta, mouth ulcers, boils, itching, laziness, cough, pain in neck, forgetfulness or loss of memory, blockages in blood veins, fever, mental and physical weakness, effect of artificial products. Hence, people who are fat, obese, those who prefer heavy food items, suffering from phlegm diseases, joint pains should not sleep in the daytime.

Exception:

During summer season, the nights are shorter than the days and as a result the gaseous and liquid contents in the body increases. In this season a person can sleep during daytime. In some states sleeping in the daytime should be avoided. Such as – learning music, singing, studies or tiredness due to more walking, tuberculosis, tiredness, thirst, motions, pain, asthma, hiccups, old age and childhood when the body is weak, in case of injury due to falling down or some kind of attack, traveling in the vehicle, awake at nighttime, anger, unhappy or fear. When a person sleeps in the night the minerals in the body are balanced. The phlegm in the body helps in growth and person is long lived.

Main rules to be followed for dinner

Digestion and sleep are interrelated. There could be some problem if the food is not digested properly. Keeping this problem in mind one should consume food as early as possible. There should be at least two hours gap between dinner and sleep. The food at night should be light and easily digestive. It is ideal to for strolls after meals as it is helpful in digestion and gives sound sleep.

Why should one avoid curd at night?

Even though curd is beneficiary it causes some kind of hindrance in the body. Because of this reason it is said that curd should be avoided during the nighttime. In the nighttime one should not sleep immediately after taking meals. The digestion process continues slowly even while sleeping. That is why there is every possi-

bility that there could be some kind of blockage or hindrance in the natural functioning of the body organs. This results in sleeplessness and indigestion. This is one of the reasons why intake of curd should be avoided in the night. One should avoid eating curds if he or she is suffering from asthma, cough, cold, joint pains.

Reading during night

It is necessary to have proper lighting while reading and writing in order to maintain good eyesight. One should also remember that sunlight is more appropriate than the artificial light. The eyesight also reduces slowly. That is why one should avoid reading at nighttime. Writing in the night is more strenuous and hence should be avoided.

Sex and intercourse

In Ayurved keeping the health and social conditions in mind a time has been fixed for intercourse and should be avoided in the following conditions;

- During menstrual cycle of women, suffering from any disease.
- Ugly, or indecent women with loose character, women of other class.
- Not friendly, lack of sexual interest, when attracted to other men or married women.
- Near auspicious trees, public places, cross roads, gardens, burial grounds, battlefields, water, hospitals, medical shops, temple or Brahmin, guru or teachers house.
- During dawn or dusk, full moon or new moon, first or eighth day of the month..
- When man is not having sexual desire.
- When the person does not take milk or any other product.
- Not consuming food or eating in excess.
- Urge to pass urine, tiredness, physical strain, or empty stomach.
- Lack of privacy.
- One should consume milk, sugar or honey after sex.