

Is memory loss from aging or lack of sleep? maybe both



The benefits of a good night's sleep on the body are well known, but did you know it is also beneficial for your brain? New findings are making strong correlations between sleep and memory, and are shedding light on why older people may have trouble with both.

A study by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Aging found a marked difference in the brain-wave activity of younger people and older people while they sleep. Looking deeper into the difference, they found that the lack of deep sleep in seniors prevents their brains from storing memories in the location of the brain used for recalling them over the long term. Instead their brains leave memories stored in the portion of the brain that is used for short-term memory.

So, if you find yourself struggling to recall facts, or having more frequent "it's-just-on-the-tip-of-my-tongue" moments, make sleep a priority.

How can you get better sleep?

- Turn off electronics a couple of hours before bedtime.
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol in the evening.
- Stick to a schedule; don't sleep late on weekends.
- Exercise in the late afternoon.
- Keep your room cool and dark. Place black tape over electronic lights if necessary.
- Keep pets and children out of the bed.
- Take a hot shower or bath before going to bed.
- When you wake up in the morning, open the blinds or step outside as soon as possible. Sunlight helps regulate your biological clock.
- Seek medical help if you have a sleep problem, especially if it includes snoring. +♥