

Amount of Sleep Required Differs With Individuals

No one knows exactly what sleep is, although it has been described as a conditioned reflex to which the individual must give heed sooner or later. But, according to one of the world's leading brain surgeons, the traditional requirement of eight hours of sleep per day is simply a "baseless fetish."

Sleep has nothing to do with a shortage of blood in the brain, or an accumulation of lactic acid within the body (fatigue poisons in the muscles), nor any changes in the nervous system. Neither is there any sleep center in the brain that acts as a regulator.

All of these explanations, given at one time or another to account for the necessity of sleep, are medical fallacies that have been put forth to explain the hitherto inexplicable.

MANY MEDICAL scientists are now of the opinion that there is a "waking center" within some nerve cells in the lower part of the brain. Sleep comes when this center is no longer stimulated by certain enzymes, these substances that act as catalysts or activators within the body. Just how it happens is unknown.

Neither is sleep to be confused with unconsciousness. When asleep, certain impulses

particularly those to which the individual is conditioned, may get through the waking center from higher brain levels and rouse him. Such impulses as these wake up a mother when an infant whimpers even though much louder noises will leave her sleep undisturbed. In unconsciousness, these impulses are blocked.

SLEEPING A little at a time matters little, say specialists

on the subject. What does matter is the anxiety that lack of sleep produces in people who are convinced that they must have a certain amount of it at a stretch no matter how induced. Actually there is no physiological reason why the needed amount of sleep cannot be taken in shifts if the person either prefers to get it that way or cannot get it in any other. And one time of the day is apparently as good as another.

Nor is going without sleep for extended periods nearly as harmful as many people are inclined to think. Laboratory experiments with a group of men at the University of Chicago demonstrated that a person may keep awake for 60 to 100 hours at a time without suffering any permanent ill-effects. Irritable, unable to concentrate and incapable of any sustained effort near the end of the experiment, the human guinea

pigs were all back to normal after one good night's sleep.

SLEEP requirements vary with the individual. Some people do very well on six hours or less each day, but others feel they need nine or 10, or even more. Most people, from habit it is said, require eight hours of sleep out of every 24. One research scientist claims that seven is absolutely all that is needed.

Anything extra is called

"luxury consumption" or "escape from boredom." However, it may be that the individual is best able to judge for himself just how much sleep he needs in order to maintain a feeling of well-being.

EXPERTS HAND out a lot of advice to insomniacs. This may include recommendations to relax, to stop worrying, to establish regular sleeping habits and keep the surroundings dark and quiet, to eat a little before going to bed, or to take a "nightcap." Sometimes

these things work and then again they do not. Lost sleep cannot be made up by conscious over-sleeping which, in any event, is not required.

Sleep cannot be turned off and on like a tap, one eminent physician stated, but the important thing is not to worry if it doesn't come or feel that sleeping pills are in order. Chronic under-sleeping has never yet killed anyone. Furthermore, it is frequently forgotten that in order to invite a good night's sleep, one must first be healthily tired.

Brotherhood Church Topic

Brotherhood Week will be observed at the Pacific Unitarian Church Sunday at 10:30 a.m. with a talk given by Mrs. Joann Scrivner on the topic "Integration Begins at Home."

Mrs. Scrivner is co-chairman of the Centinela Bay Human Relations Committee. In her talk she will discuss the efforts of her committee to promote brotherhood.

Services of the Pacific Unitarian Church are held at the Miraleste School located at the intersection of Via Canada and Palos Verdes East in San Pedro.

Law In Action

More and more taxpayers are getting audited as a part of the government's revenue collection. If selected, you may well ask, "Why pick on me?"

Well, you may have made an arithmetic mistake, deducted too much, claimed a large refund compared to your income, had a big income, had too small income. Or, you may have been picked out by chance.

There are many audits. An auditor may ask you to bring in your records to talk over your return. Often one talk is enough. Again you may have several talks before the matter is closed. You may bring your lawyer along if you like or anyone who helped you make out your last return.

Sometimes a federal agent may come to your home or place of business to check your records in person. Just showing the agent your records may satisfy him. But he may "adjust" your return. You then must make steps to pay, or to challenge his conclusions.

When a special agent comes to see your records, it may be well to have your lawyer on hand.

As a rule most honest differences over taxes are settled without suits. But not always. Whenever taxes are challenged, take prompt steps to protect your interests. People have lost good defenses or claims by failing to act within the times set by law.

The workload of the tax offices has brought on automatic data processing magnetic tape and other devices to store and analyze returns on each taxpayer, say, by 1970 or sooner. Then more audits.

Note: California lawyers offer this column so you may know about our law.

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