Outreach
For Members of Benefits USA
Benefits USA



Three Sleep Myths That Could be Keeping You Awake

Key takeaways

- Habits, routines and environmental cues work together to influence your body's natural sleep-wake cycle.
- One of the most important players in that ecosystem is melatonin, which helps signal to your brain that it's time to wind down.
- Better sleep is one of the strongest investments you can make in your health and well-being.

(BPT) - Americans have never been more focused on optimizing their health. They wear devices that measure nearly every aspect of their day - from workouts and steps to heart rate and recovery - and increasingly turn to GLP-1 medications as part of the weight management journey.

Alongside these changes, experts are encouraging people to prioritize another key pillar of health: quality sleep, which plays an important role in overall well-being and can support healthy lifestyle habits.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 30% of U.S. adults regularly get less than the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep each night[1].

Dr. Stephanie Stahl, Medical Director at Indiana University Health, notes that many people still treat sleep as something they'll fit in if there's time. Stahl is the Sleep Medicine Fellowship Program Director and Associate Professor at Indiana University School of Medicine as well as Natrol® Sleep Science Advisory Board member. "Many people think of sleep as the first thing they can sacrifice when life gets busy. But sleep isn't a luxury. It's one of the most powerful tools we have to support our health, mental well-being and daily performance."

That can be difficult in today's always-on world. Packed schedules, constant notifications and late-night scrolling can all work against the body's natural sleep-wake cycle. In fact, 38% of adults say using their phone or tablet before bed to read the news or "doomscroll" makes their sleep somewhat or significantly worse[2].

What sleep myths could be keeping you awake?

"One of the biggest misconceptions I hear is that sleep starts when your head hits the pillow," said Stahl. "The truth is that your body has been preparing for sleep all day. Your light exposure, activity, meals, stress and evening routine all influence how prepared your brain and body are for sleep."

She describes this as your sleep ecosystem - the daily habits, routines and environmental cues that work together to influence your body's natural sleep-wake cycle. One of the most important players in that ecosystem is melatonin, a hormone your body naturally produces in response to darkness. Rather than forcing sleep, melatonin helps signal to your brain that it's time to wind down.

Stahl is helping to debunk three common sleep myths



Myth: Better sleep starts at bedtime.

Stahl: "Great sleep starts the moment you wake up. Morning sunlight helps regulate your body's internal clock and supports natural melatonin production later that evening."



Myth: The eight hours you're asleep are all that matter.

Stahl: "The hour before bed matters, too. A consistent wind-down routine, like dimming the lights and avoiding screen time, helps prepare your brain and body for quality sleep."



Myth: I'll catch up on sleep this weekend.

Stahl: "Consistency matters more than catch-up sleep. Keeping a regular sleep and wake schedule (yes, even on weekends) helps reinforce your body's natural rhythm."

If travel, changing schedules or other temporary disruptions affect that rhythm, melatonin supplements can help support your body's natural sleep-wake cycle. Dr. Stephanie Stahl

What small habits lead to better sleep?

The good news is that improving sleep doesn't require overhauling your lifestyle. Stahl recommends focusing on a few consistent habits: Get outside for natural light early in the day, stay physically active, avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening, maintain a regular sleep schedule and create a cool, dark, quiet sleep environment.

When healthy habits need extra support that is safe

Healthy sleep habits are the foundation of better sleep, but even the best routines can't account for everything. Travel, shift work, changing schedules, stress and age-related changes can all temporarily disrupt your body's natural rhythm.

It's one reason more than 27% of U.S. adults report using melatonin supplements, making it one of the country's most commonly used sleep supplements[3]. Melatonin is a well-studied naturally occurring hormone that plays a key role in regulating the sleep-wake cycle. When used as directed, it is widely recognized as a safe, effective and non-habit-forming option for temporary sleep support. Backed by 30 years of scientific research and widespread use, melatonin is the No. 1 doctor recommended ingredient for sleep[4], recognized by experts as a safe, reliable way to help people fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer*.

"Healthy sleep starts with healthy habits," says Stahl. "Melatonin is a hormone your body naturally produces to help signal when it's time to sleep. If travel, changing schedules or other temporary disruptions affect that rhythm, melatonin supplements can help support your body's natural sleep-wake cycle. The key is to think of it as one part of a broader sleep strategy, not a replacement for healthy habits."

Because sleep challenges vary from person to person, some people may also benefit from ingredients such as magnesium glycinate, valerian root, GABA or L-theanine depending on their individual needs. Guided by leading sleep experts, including Stahl, Natrol develops science-backed sleep solutions designed to complement healthy sleep habits and support different sleep needs.

The benefits of prioritizing sleep extend well beyond feeling rested - 88% of adults who are satisfied with their sleep, report they are flourishing, compared with just 47% of those who aren't[5]. Better sleep isn't just another wellness goal. It's one of the strongest investments you can make in your overall health and well-being.

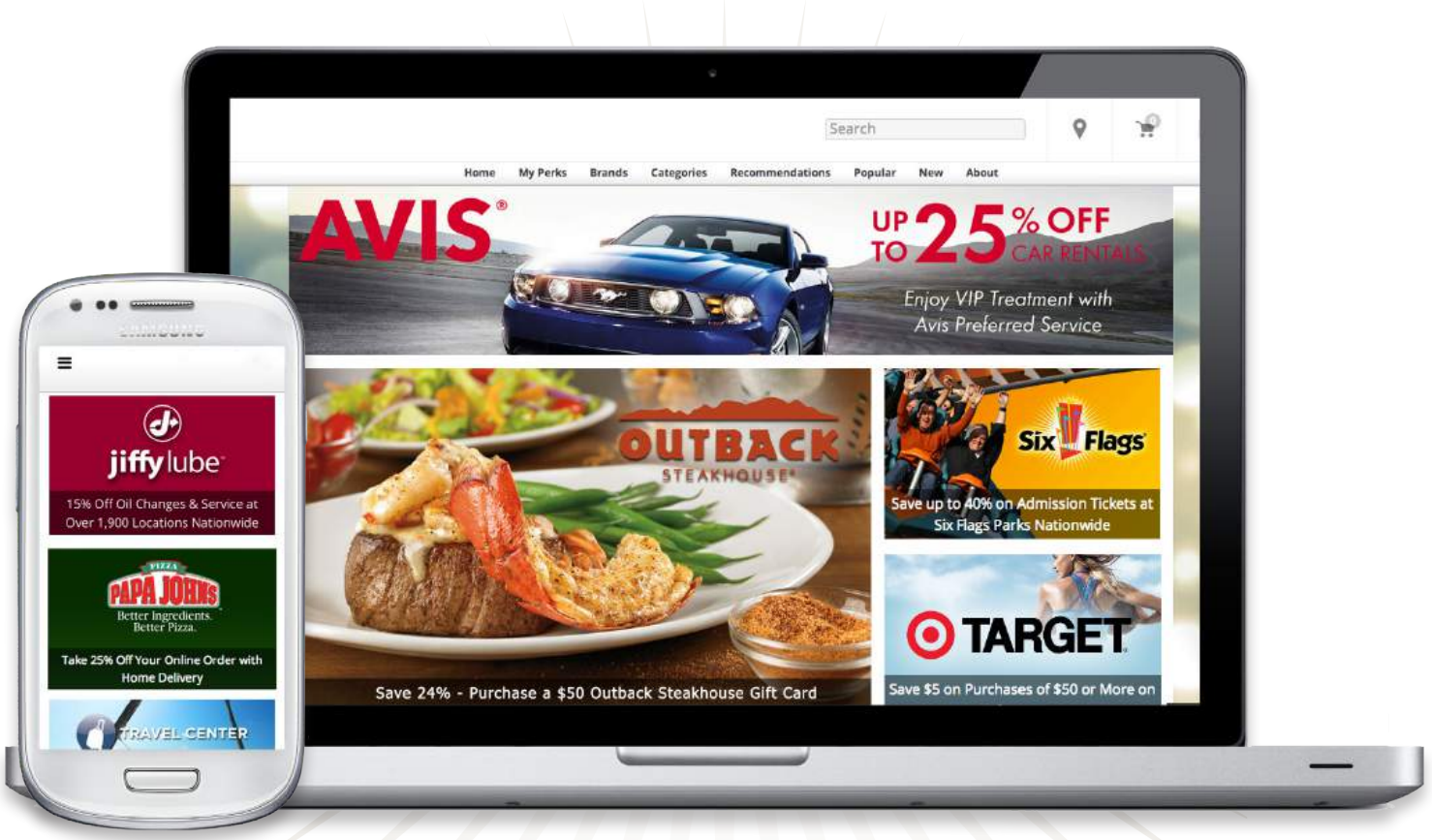
These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

SOURCES:

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Skin Cancer Genes May Raise Risk for Other Cancers

Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. A recent study found that some people diagnosed with melanoma were more likely to have mutations (or changes) in certain genes. The changes they found were also linked to a higher risk for other types of cancer.

An NIH-funded research team looked at data from two large studies. One took place in the U.S. and the other in the United Kingdom. Both studies included healthy people and those with melanoma. The team analyzed the health records of nearly 700,000 people.

The researchers focused on eight genes known to increase the risk of melanoma. Mutations in these genes weren't common in healthy participants. They appeared more often in those with melanoma. People younger than age 40 with a single melanoma were more likely to have one of the gene mutations. So were those with multiple melanomas.

The team found some genes were also linked to other types of cancer. People with certain gene changes showed an increased risk for prostate cancer, breast cancer, or myeloma.

"If someone with melanoma has one of these mutations, other tissues may face an elevated cancer risk," says NIH's Dr. Michael Sargen, who led the study.

More research is needed to verify that gene changes are linked to other types of cancer. If they are, gene testing may help some patients and their family members better understand their risk for other cancers.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Benefits USA will be held at 12645 Olive Blvd, Suite 300A, St. Louis, MO 63141, on Wednesday, December 9, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY
Benefits USA
December 9, 2026 Annual Meeting of Members
THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF
BENEFITS USA

The undersigned member of Benefits USA does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Benefits USA, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Benefits USA and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [ ], or to [ ] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors: Zach Pranger, Jacque Bardgett and Tom Ebner
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2026

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12645 Olive Blvd, Suite 300A, St. Louis, MO 63141 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri
November 2, 2026
Date

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