



We Are All Babies!

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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When we don't sleep and don't eat, we become just like babies - we cry!

We all know this and yet we are living in a world where both sleeping and eating are neglected.

A 2011 article published by CBC news entitled "Lack of sleep called global epidemic" stated that a majority of Canadians are sleep deprived. But Canadians aren't the only ones suffering. In fact, 45% of the world's population have sleep problems including insomnia, obstructive sleep apnea, and restless leg syndrome. Even though this report is almost a decade old, there isn't any evidence to suggest that the numbers have improved.

Those who are tired can find themselves feeling irritable, foggy and suffering from physical illness. The scary thing is when one drives to work and then wonders how they got there! Fatigue can cause them to zone out rather than being alert at a safe level.

Many people admit that they don't get enough sleep. They become lost in their visiting, household chores, television or the internet and before they realize, it is past their bedtime. Some people tend to brag that they are so busy in their lives they can "get by" on less sleep than they know that they really do need. Others actually go to bed but then find that their minds are so busy they cannot fall asleep.

In 2015 The United States National Sleep Foundation published a handy chart that shows their recommended hours of sleep for different age levels. It suggests that school-aged children need between 9 and 12 hours; adults 7 to 9 hours and seniors 7 to 8 hours a night.

When it comes to food, we all know that eating regularly with plates that are primarily filled with vegetables are healthy choices. What we know and what we do, however, do not always match. It is easy to quickly access drive-throughs where it is often less expensive to purchase a meal deal that includes French fries and desert rather than just a hamburger. Not everyone knows how to cook or takes time to prepare nutritious meals at home. And both busyness of our lives and fatigue can lead to a situation of skipping meals altogether.

I am surprised by how many clients tell me that they only eat once a day. I am also quite horrified to hear about the food choices that some people make. Usually I ask them what would happen if they filled their vehicle's gas tank with sugar instead of fuel. Everyone knows the answer to that one! Yet they fill themselves with the things that will not enhance performance.

So, what is the difference between looking after a baby and looking after ourselves? Not much! If we keep a baby's tummy full and bottom dry, the baby will sleep well and play happily. That requires lots of planning, preparation and routine.

Well, inside each of us is a baby that needs the same kind of loving care.

This week try filling your tummy on a regular basis with nutritious foods and planning a routine that allows you to get enough rest. I think you will be surprised by the difference.

It won't take long until your actions will result in contented "gurgling".

Here's to self-care!