

The Time Change This Weekend Will Add to New Jerseyans' Sleep Woes

New Jersey Health & Well-Being Poll Finds Widespread Sleep Problems

New Brunswick, NJ – Time changes are always rough, and no one likes to lose an hour of sleep. But for about 2 million New Jerseyans, setting the clock ahead on March 10 will be brutal. Why? Because about 30 percent of Garden State adults report having problems sleeping.

Among the findings of a scientific statewide poll conducted by Rutgers Center for State Health Policy are:

- 30 percent of the state's almost seven million adults report having had trouble sleeping at some point in the week before they were interviewed.
- 31 percent say they are dissatisfied with the quality of their sleep—including 16 percent (roughly 1 million people) who are “very” dissatisfied.
- 36 percent say they experience at least one of these problems: not having enough time to sleep, trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping with a snoring partner or too much other noise.

“Studies have made clear that sleep is vital to our health and well-being,” said Joel Cantor, Director of Rutgers Center for State Health Policy. “People who routinely do not get enough sleep are at an increased risk for heart disease, obesity, diabetes, accidents, and other health problems. Insufficient sleep can also lead to reduced productivity at work or school and a lower ability to fight off infections such as colds.”

The New Jersey Health & Well-being Poll was conducted with a scientific sample of 860 New Jersey adults between January 16 and February 12, 2019 on sleep and other forces affecting respondents' health and well-being. The poll, conducted with live respondents in English and Spanish via cell phone (n=526) and landline telephone (n=334), has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.97 percentage points (subgroup results have higher margins of error). More information about the poll can be found in the [Methodology Report](#). The Health & Well-being Poll was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Rutgers Center for State Health Policy (www.cshp.rutgers.edu) and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org).

In more detailed findings, the poll suggests as many as 43 percent recollected having experienced a sleep-related problem in the month before being interviewed, with 30 percent reporting a problem in

the last week. Strikingly, nearly one in four (22%) reported a sleep problem the night before they were interviewed, suggesting a very large number of state residents have a chronic sleep problem. Here are some of the problems reported:

- About one quarter (24%) of New Jerseyans say they have a “big problem” either falling asleep or waking up too early. And just over another quarter (27%) say this is a “small problem” for them, totaling up to about half of those adults living in the state bothered by one of these sleep problems.
- Just 16 percent say “not having enough time to sleep” is a big problem for them, and another 21 percent say it is a small problem, totaling to 37 percent.
- Statewide, just nine percent report that their partner’s snoring or other noise is a big problem. However, 12 percent of those who are either married or report living with a partner say this is a big problem, and 34 percent of them say it is either a big or small problem for them. Women were more likely to report partner snoring or other noise as a big or small problem than men (35% compared to 20%).
- More of those who report their health as fair or poor said they had problems sleeping in the past month (52%) compared to those reporting excellent or very good health (37%), and this is even higher for those reporting fair or poor mental health (60%) compared to those reporting excellent or very good mental health (33%). These trends held across all the sleep questions in the poll.

“Our finding that sleep and health problems are connected is striking.” Cantor continued, “Health problems are likely to interfere with sleep, but poor sleep can also cause or worsen health problems.”

Other findings from the poll include:

- The share of the population reporting problems sleeping in the past month declines with age. For example, more young adults ages 18-29 reported problems sleeping in the past month (53%) compared to adults ages 65 and over (33%).
- Fewer black non-Hispanic adults reported sleeping problems in the past month (34%) than other racial-ethnic groups (about 44%). Asian non-Hispanic adults and Hispanic adults were more likely to report that not having enough time to sleep was a big or small problem (50% and 52%, respectively) compared to adults overall (37%).
- More single-never married and divorced-separated adults reported problems sleeping in the past month (51% and 50%, respectively) compared to those who are married/living with a partner (39%) or widowed (35%).

- Adults with children living in the household were more likely to report not having enough time to sleep (46%) compared to adults living alone (26%).
- Those with more years of education were more likely to report sleeping problems in the past month (about 46%) compared to those with less than a high school education (35%).
- Non-U.S. citizens were more likely to report not having enough time to sleep (56%) compared to U.S. citizens (36%).

Resources about sleep and how to manage sleep problems are available at these links:

- <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/sleep-health/ebrs>
- <http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/need-sleep/whats-in-it-for-you/health>
- https://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/everyday-healthy-living/mental-health-and-relationship/get-enough-sleep#the-basics_1

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