

Mayo Clinic Minute: Are you getting enough sleep for optimal heart health?

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Intro: Getting a good night's sleep is important. But exactly how much sleep do you need? Recently, the American Heart Association added sleep to its checklist for improving and maintaining your heart health. Dr. Regis Fernandes, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist, explains how many hours of sleep people need for optimal heart health.

When it comes to sleep, it turns out quantity is just as important as quality.

"The reason why is studies have shown if you sleep less than seven hours a day, you have a higher cardiovascular risk or a risk for heart disease or stroke," says Dr. Fernandes.

Sleep was recently added to the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8, along with maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, staying physically active, eating a healthy diet, and controlling your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. Dr. Fernandes says there is an ideal number of hours your heart needs.

"The sweet spot is eight hours — minimum seven, maximum nine — but the sweet spot is right at eight," says Dr. Fernandes.

That means eight hours of quality sleep.

"You have to turn off the TV and cellphones, make the room cool and dark, and avoid alcohol," advises Dr. Fernandes.