**Signs of Sleep Deprivation**

Even if you think you're getting enough sleep, you may be suffering from sleep deprivation. The symptoms of sleep deprivation are not necessarily as clear-cut as you might think; in other words, it's not just feeling sleepy all the time that is your cue that you're short on sleep. So how do you know? Here are some tips.

**Regularity**

Everyone has trouble sleeping now and then. We all experience the occasional sleepless night and groggy morning. We may even go through a period when we experience these things, such as during life transitions and stresses. But when sleep deprivation may be a problem is when it is a regular occurrence, and is unrelated to circumstances.

**Sleep Debt**

Experts point out "sleep debt" as a way in which sleep deprivation can enter your life without you necessarily realizing it. Sleep debt is accumulated gradually, and is said to result from an hour or more of missed sleep every night for several nights. Sleep debt can get so bad that several nights of regular sleep are required to improve normal functioning.

**Mood**

Lack of sleep can make people very irritable, sources say. Are you snappish and impatient? Do you find yourself having little tolerance for your own mistakes and those of others? It may be lack of sleep that's the culprit.

**Increased Appetite and/or Weight Gain**

Did you know that a lack of sleep may increase your appetite and lead to weight gain? Perhaps the body's need for energy when it's sleep-deprived is what leads to a craving for sweets, carbohydrates, or just food in general. Increased appetite may also be the result of hormones that kick in when the body is deprived of sleep.

Even without a marked increase in appetite, research has shown the sleep deprivation can result in weight gain. This also may be due to hormonal imbalances caused by too little sleep.

**Mistakes**

If you find yourself making silly mistakes on a regular basis - dropping things, forgetting dates on the calendar, messing up your schedule, and so forth - it may be your sleepy brain. Studies show that those who don't get enough sleep have a hard time performing normal tasks that are no problem when they are getting enough sleep.

**Depression**

As with other mental disorders, sleep deprivation may not be a cause of depression, but rather a symptom. However, some sources do point out that depression can result from a lack of sleep. If you are feeling depressed and are having a hard time determining why, you might take a look at your sleep habits.