



**Kate:** Hello, I'm Kate Colin and this is 6 Minute English. Today I'm joined by Rebecca Byrne and we're talking about sleep, or lack of it. Hi Rebecca, I have a question for you to start the programme with - how many hours sleep do you need a night?

**Rebecca:** I need on average 7 to 8 hours I think to feel...human at least.

**Kate:** That's a good long time. Well, this month is **National Bed Month** – an event which is organised by The Sleep Council. Their aim is to remind us of the importance of getting a good night's sleep. 40 years ago most people got 8 hours sleep a night. But with busy lifestyles today, we're more likely to get around 6, which is not enough for most people. So in today's programme we're going to talk about what happens when you don't get enough sleep.

**Rebecca:** (yawns) I'm feeling pretty tired already actually...why don't you wake me up with the question for this week?

**Kate:** Alright then, here we go. What is the longest time someone has managed to go without sleep?

- a) 20 days
- b) 11 days
- c) 3 days

**Rebecca:** Answers

**Kate:** Okay, we'll check your answer at the end of the programme. Not sleeping enough is sometimes referred to as '**sleep deprivation**'. To be deprived of something means to not have enough. This is something which unfortunately is beginning to affect many school children today. Listen to the following extract to hear a teacher talking about what happens when her pupils don't get enough sleep. Can you tell me what she says are some of the symptoms of **sleep deprivation**?

**Woman**

It shows in all sorts of different ways, concentration is poor, behaviour gets worse as the week goes on, as the kids are getting less and less sleep.

**Rebecca:** She said that their **concentration is poor**. If someone's 'concentration is poor' it means that they are less able to think clearly. She also says that they do not behave well, so they may be talking a lot and not able to do much work.

**Kate:** That's correct. In the next extract she mentions '**sleeping in**'. This is an expression we use when we can spend longer than usual in bed because we don't have to get up for work or school. Or we can 'sleep in' by mistake, when we fail to wake up when we're supposed to. For example, I was late for work today because 'I slept in'. On to the clip...

**Woman**

Over the weekend, they get the chance often to **sleep in** on Saturday or Sunday and so they can catch up on some of the sleep and so by Friday, **tempers are getting very frayed** because they're just very **stressed, tetchy and sleepy**.

**Rebecca:** So, she said they get the chance to 'sleep in' at the weekends. She also says as the week goes on, her students get more and more tired. The symptoms of being tired are that '**tempers are frayed**' and they are '**stressed**', '**tetchy**' and '**sleepy**'.

**Kate:** Yes, the expression '**tempers are frayed**' means to get 'easily angry'.

**Rebecca:** and **'tetchy'** is often used when talking about how you feel when you haven't had enough sleep, it means easily angered or upset.

**Kate:** Next we're going to hear what a sleep expert has to say about the effect of not getting enough sleep. See if you can hear what are the main areas?

**Man**

Where it's damaging (I think there's at least 3 general areas). One **intellectually** - sleep is important for **concentration** and **vigilance**. Another aspect is **behavioural**. They tend to become **tetchy** and **irritable** and **hostile** during the day.

**Kate:** He says there are 3 general areas where which are affected by sleep deprivation. The first was that it can be damaging intellectually. He says that sleep is important for **'concentration'** and for **'vigilance'**. What do these words mean?

**Jackie:** 'Concentration' is the ability to think clearly and carefully about one thing in particular. To do mathematics or to read a book for example, requires concentration.

**Kate:** .....and 'vigilance'?

**Rebecca:** 'Vigilance' is the ability to pay attention and to notice things, especially possible danger.

**Kate:** He also goes on to say that another negative aspect of sleep deprivation is **'behavioural'**. This word relates to how the children are behaving and acting in the classroom. They can be **'tetchy'**, **'irritable'** and **'hostile'**. We came across the word **'tetchy'** earlier but what do the other words mean?

**Rebecca:** **'Irritable'** means that someone becomes annoyed very easily and **'hostile'** means unfriendly and likely to be disagreeable.

**Kate:** Exactly, let's listen to the last clip...

**Man**

I think also more worryingly, there's also this association with **obesity** and the kids getting sleep tend to be the fatter kids.

**Rebecca:** He said that it has an association with '**obesity**'. Obesity is when people weigh too much or are too fat for their height. I suppose this much be related to sleep deprivation because when you're tired, you do tend to eat more.

**Kate:** So let's go over some of the vocabulary we came across today:  
We had **sleep deprivation** which means to not have enough sleep  
**sleep in**, when we spend longer than usual in bed  
**tempers are getting very frayed** means to get easily angry  
**tetchy** is to be irritable, easily angered or upset  
**concentration** is the ability to think clearly and carefully  
**vigilance** is the ability to pay attention and to notice things, especially possible danger  
**hostile** is unfriendly and likely to be disagreeable  
**obesity** is extremely overweight or fat

Finally to the question I asked earlier. What is the longest someone has gone without sleep?

**Rebecca:** I said 3 days.

**Kate:** I'm afraid you were wrong. It's actually an incredible 11 days! The record was broken by 17 year old Andy Gardner in 1964. Well that's all we have time for today. I hope we've convinced you to get a good night's sleep tonight.

**Both:** Until next time - goodbye!