

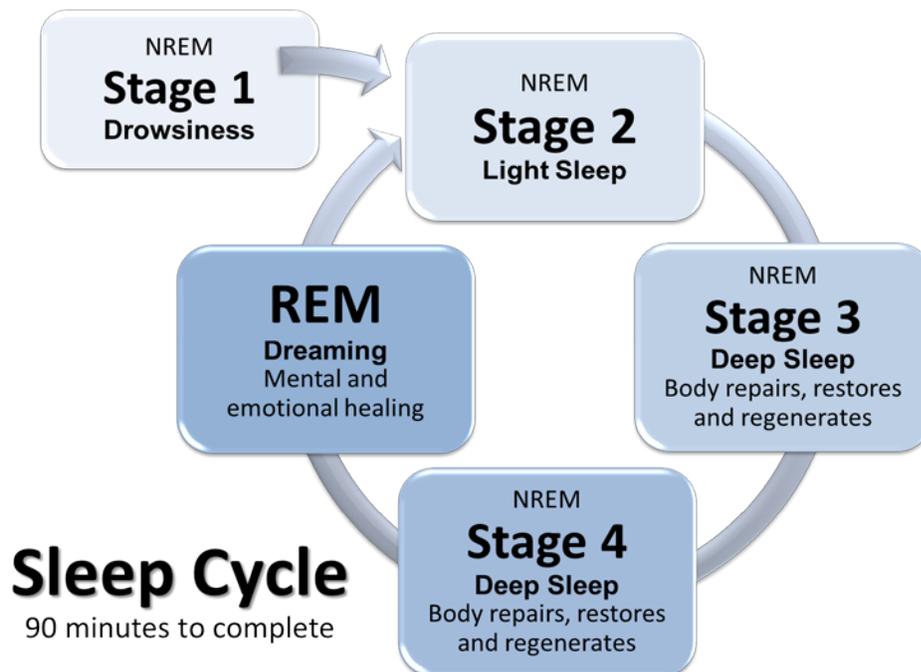
Promoting Sleep in the ICU

Patients in the ICU need adequate sleep in order to heal. However, for patients in the ICU, sleep can be hard to come by because of round-the-clock care and monitoring. As a result, the patients who need the most rest may get the least.

Healing

Sleep allows both the body and the mind to heal. Sleep is made up of cycles. Each cycle lasts about 90 minutes and contains two types of sleep:

1. **Non-rapid-eye movement (NREM).** This type of sleep has 4 stages where stage 3 and stage 4 help the body to save energy, repair and build tissue leading to physical healing and growth.
2. **Rapid-eye movement (REM).** This type of sleep is responsible for mental and emotional healing, brain repair and growth.



In a healthy person, a complete sleep period is 4 to 6 cycles and lasts about 6 to 8 hours. In an ICU patient, total sleep time is much less with patients being woken up around 50 times over the day and night. This causes severe sleep deprivation.

Sleep deprivation

Sleep deprivation causes:

- a weakened immune system which makes it hard to fight infections.
- changes in metabolism and hormone production making it harder for the heart, lungs and muscles to work properly.
- slower healing of wounds.
- mental and emotional changes such as delirium or depression.

Things that affect sleep

Here in the ICU, there are many things that can affect sleep. Patients have difficulty sleeping or are woken up by:

- noises such as alarms, machines, phones and conversations
- lighting
- patient care activities such as taking vital signs, washing or turning the patient
- tests and procedures
- breathing machines
- stress and anxiety
- delirium
- pain
- medication

How can you help?

As it is hard to sleep in the ICU, it is important for your loved one to get the most sleep as possible. Patients are in the ICU because they are very sick and need critical care treatment and sleep to heal.

Whenever possible, it is important that patients get at least 90 minutes of non-stop sleep. This 90 minutes allows a complete sleep cycle to occur so that your loved one can benefit the most from sleep's physical and mental healing powers. Please talk with the bedside nurse about rest periods before waking your loved one.

Let us know your loved one's sleep routines such as side versus back sleeping, having music or the TV on and whether they like to go to sleep early or late. This will help us care for them better.

Take note...

It is also important to remember that you too need to make sure you get enough sleep. This will help prevent you from getting run down. Being at your best will help you to support your loved one and those you may care for at home.