

...a medical officer at  
Mvungu hospital, warns that the most

caused by vitamin A deficiency among  
children. Dr Mukisa says: "The vitamin helps  
to shorten or reduce complications of diseases

improve wound healing, reduce wrinkles and  
protects the skin from Ultra Violet radiations  
from the sun.

## LIFESTYLE

# How sleeping positions affect our health

You turn off the lights and get yourself ready to sleep. Are you on your back, side, or stomach? Your sleep position can be linked to things such as back pain, snoring, and how often you wake up in the night.

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One of the interesting aspects of parenthood is observing babies learn to sleep. Like contortionists putting on a show, they bend, stretch, curl in what looks dangerously bone breaking positions yet they sleep through it all.

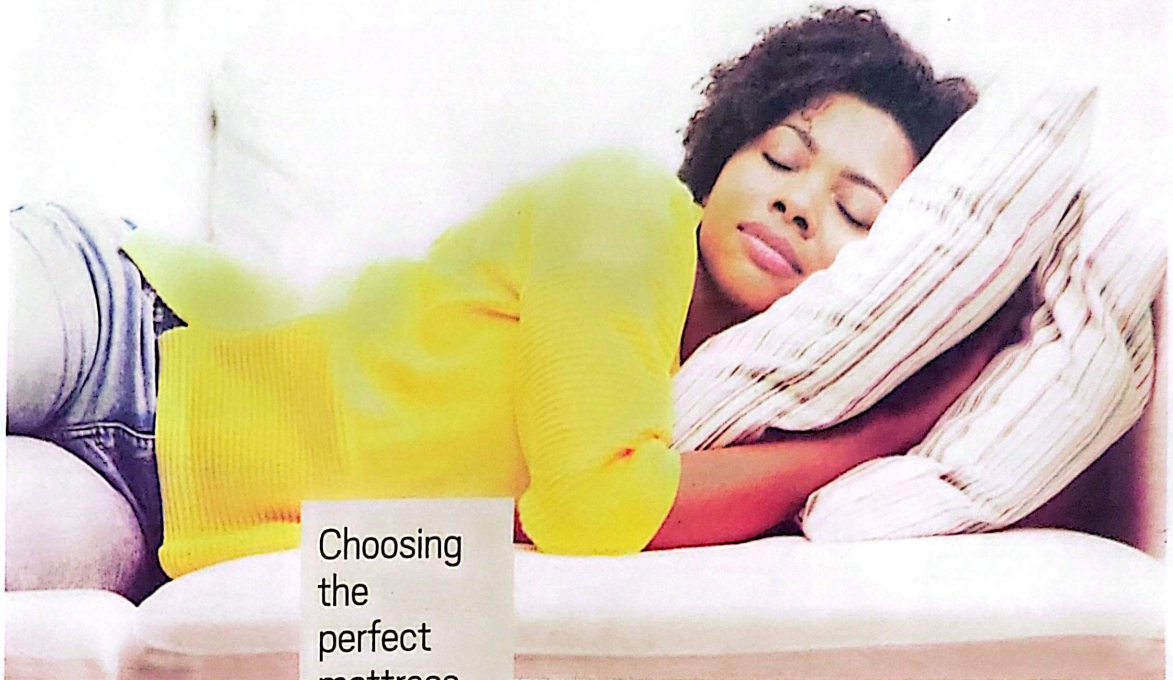
Surprisingly not much changes during adulthood. You would expect an adult to know their favourite position and simply assume that and go to sleep. But no. We toss and turn all night long until we find or create that mold in the mattress that fits perfectly to our bodies and is comfortable enough for us to doze for a while before beginning the process afresh.

But did you know that the way you lie while sleeping does not only affect the quality of your sleep, but it could also be causing damage to your muscles, nerves as well as premature facial wrinkling? Experts reveal that while every individual has their preferred positions some of them are harmful and should be avoided and recommend those that are good for the body's general wellness.

### Sleeping on the back

Dr George Bwesigye, a general physician at Najjera Hospital, generally recommends sleeping on your back. He notes that sleeping on your back allows your head, neck, and spine to relax as there is no pressure being exerted on them. "It also promotes spine health especially when one uses a small to a medium pillow to keep the curves of the spine in line thus avoiding damage," he adds.

This position has an advantage for the ladies as it keeps the breasts from getting squashed during sleep thus maintaining their firmness. Dr Edward Mugisha, a paediatrician from Keserena Children's Hospital, Bukoto, also recommends this position for neonates (babies aged one-three months) to avoid their breath from getting obstructed. The position, however,



## Choosing the perfect mattress

makes snoring more severe.

### On the side

People who have snoring problems and sleep apnea (a sleep disorder that occurs when a person's breathing is interrupted during sleep) are advised to sleep on their side with their legs stretched out straight. This position is also good for controlling neck and back pain.

### On the left side

Dr Herman Sewagudde, a gynaecologist from Seven Hills Medical Centre,

Your mattress' comfort level plays a big role in whether you sleep well or toss and turn all night long. A perfect mattress needs to support your body in a neutral position, one in which your spine has a nice curve and your buttocks, heels, shoulders, and head are supported in proper alignment. If the mattress is too firm it will force the body to be on the same level, which is rather very uncomfortable and unhealthy. If it is too soft, then your body will not be supported at all. "What you need is a perfect balance between the two extremes although I would recommend a firmer bed for people with lower back pain," says Dr George Bwesigye, a general physician at Najjera Hospital.



This position (where your torso and legs are relatively straight) helps decrease acid reflux, and since your spine is elongated, it controls back and neck pain. STOCK PHOTO



Ntinda, recommends the fetal position for expecting mothers. "Sleeping on the left side prevents the baby from pressing on the liver which is on the right side," Dr Sewagudde advises.

Most adults actually prefer this position with different variations to it. While others adopt the tight childhood fetal position, others loosen the hunch on the knees and torso so as to reduce pressure being exerted on the diaphragm, which improves breathing.

### On the stomach

Doctors point out that sleeping on your stomach is possibly the worst position of them all. They reveal that people who sleep on their tummies are susceptible to neck and back pain.

Dr Sewagudde cautions pregnant mothers against this position because they will put pressure on their muscles and joints, possibly leading to numbness, tingling, aches, and irritated nerves. It is also unfriendly for breasts as it contributes breast sagging as a result of being squashed and stretched during sleep.