

8 hours of good sleep helps to Slim Down increasing weigh loss by 55%



If you're trying your best to eat right and exercise, it might be worth it to make sure you get the proper amount of sleep each night, according to a new study that suggests lack of sleep can throw off a diet.

According to CNN Health, research from the University of Chicago showed that dieters who slept for 8.5 hours lost 55 percent more body fat than dieters who slept 5.5 hours

"The dieters who slept less reported feeling hungrier throughout the course of the study," CNN said, even though "they ate the same diet, consumed multivitamins and performed the same type of work or leisure activities."

The study authors concluded that "Lack of sufficient sleep may compromise the efficacy of typical dietary interventions for weight loss and related metabolic risk reduction," CNN said. The study was released October 4 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

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Good sleep is a cornerstone of good health, yet is probably, by and large, the most ignored factor.

According to the 2010 "Sleep in America Poll" by The National Sleep Foundation, only about 40 percent of respondents reported getting a good night's sleep every night, or almost every night, of the week.

There are many likely reasons for this. But part of the problem may be that many have bought into the fallacy that you can safely make do with less than eight hours of sleep a day. Modern society has more or less brainwashed us into thinking that sleeping is for wimps, or a sign of lazy luxury that most cannot afford.

This, as it turns out, is not true, and studies have linked poor or insufficient sleep with a wide range of health problems -- including weight gain and obesity.

This latest study again confirms that if you do not take your sleep needs seriously, you could be unknowingly sabotaging your weight, not to mention your overall health.

Sleep Less, Weigh More

In this latest study, published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, dieters who slept for 8.5 hours lost 55 percent more body fat than dieters who only got 5.5 hours of shut-eye.

They also reported feeling less hungry throughout each day compared with those who slept less.

These results were echoed in another recent study published earlier this year, in which subjects who slept less than six hours per night had a 32 percent gain in visceral fat, compared to a 13 percent gain among those who slept six or seven hours per night, and a 22 percent increase among men and women who got at least eight hours of sleep each night. This is the type of fat linked to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, strokes and other chronic diseases.

But why would lack of sleep lead to increased weight?

It is believed that insufficient amounts of sleep affect your hunger-regulating hormones, leptin and ghrelin. This and other studies have shown that when you are sleep deprived, your body decreases production of leptin (whose job it is to tell your brain when you're full and should stop eating), while at the same time increasing levels of ghrelin, a hormone that triggers hunger.

Lack of sleep also appears to affect glucose and fat utilization in your body, as well as energy metabolism – all of which can lead to a decreased ability to lose weight.

Although none of the studies mentioned in this article can prove that a lack of sleep directly causes fat gain, they all support the proposed link between sleep duration -- particularly a lack of sleep – and weight gain, as well as an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Your Hormones Depend on Your Body Clock to Set the Pace...

It's important to realize just how vital a function your internal body clock serves, because in many ways it helps regulate your overall health.

The physiological functions of virtually all organisms are governed by 24-hour circadian rhythms. Your circadian clock is an essential time-tracking system, which your body uses to anticipate environmental changes and adapt to the appropriate time of day.

When operating normally, this 'internal clock' is what wakes your body in the morning and makes you get sleepy once darkness falls.

However, if you deprive yourself of sleep, or eat meals at odd hours (times at which your internal clock expects you to be sleeping), you send conflicting signals to your body that can confuse and unbalance this internal system.

In one study, researchers found that people who got four hours of sleep a night for just two nights in a row experienced:

18 percent reduction in leptin

28 percent increase in ghrelin

As described earlier, these hormonal alterations basically instruct your body to "be hungry," and "store fat."

In addition, previous research has also shown that subjects tend to crave more sweet and starchy foods opposed to vegetables and dairy products when getting less than six hours of sleep.

One possible explanation for this is that your brain is fueled by glucose (blood sugar); therefore, when you're sleep deprived, your brain searches for carbohydrates.

Regardless of the exact mechanisms, it's clear that sleep deprivation can push your body into a pre-diabetic state and make you feel hungry, even if you've already eaten – both of which can lead to weight problems.

Other Health Risks Linked to Poor or Insufficient Sleep

In addition to impaired weight control, poor sleep is associated with a number of other potentially serious health risks.

For example, interrupted or impaired sleep can:

Dramatically weaken your immune system

Seriously impair your memory; even a single night of poor sleep—meaning sleeping only 4 to 6 hours—can impact your ability to think clearly the next day

Impair your performance on physical or mental tasks, and decrease your problem solving ability

Raise blood sugar levels and increase your risk of diabetes

Accelerate aging -- Sleep deprivation prematurely ages you by interfering with your growth hormone production, normally released by your pituitary gland during deep sleep (and during certain types of exercise, such as Peak 8 exercises). Growth hormone helps you look and feel younger.

Lead to hypertension (high blood pressure)

Cause or worsen depression

Increase your risk of cardiovascular disease – One recent study found that sleeping fewer than five hours a day more than doubles your risk of being diagnosed with angina, coronary heart disease, heart attack or stroke.

But sleeping more than seven hours also increased the risk of cardiovascular disease; more than nine hours of sleep resulted in a 50 percent increase in risk.

Although a direct causative relationship between certain amounts of sleep and cardiovascular disease has yet to be found, researchers believe it is related to your endocrine and metabolic functions. In addition, sleep deprivation can impair your glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity, and can raise your blood pressure -- all of which are associated with hardening of your arteries.

Increase your risk of cancer and accelerate tumor growth by altering the balance of hormones in your body. (Tumors grow two to three times faster in laboratory animals with severe sleep dysfunctions).

One explanation for this is related to your production of melatonin, which is both a hormone and an antioxidant. When your circadian rhythms are disrupted, your body produces less melatonin, which reduces your body's ability to fight cancer since melatonin helps suppress free radicals that can lead to cancer. This is also why tumors grow faster when you sleep poorly.

Increase your risk of dying from any cause – According to one study, people with chronic insomnia have a three times greater risk of dying from any cause.

So, What's the Ideal Amount of Sleep?

Interestingly, excessive sleeping is not the answer to any of these problems because sleeping more than nine hours has also been linked to a number of health issues, including weight gain, back pain, headaches, depression and heart disease.

So, what is the ideal amount of sleep?

It appears the Goldilocks' zone can be found somewhere between six to eight hours per night for most adults.

Keep in mind that your age and activity level will influence your sleep needs to some extent. Children and teens, for instance, need more sleep than adults.

However, your sleep needs are individual to you. You may require more or less sleep than someone of the same age, gender and activity level. Part of the reason for the difference has to do with what the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) calls your basal sleep need and your sleep debt:

Basal Sleep Need: The amount of sleep you need on a regular basis for optimal performance

Sleep Debt: The accumulated sleep lost due to poor sleep habits, sickness, environmental factors and other causes

Studies suggest that healthy adults have a basal sleep need of seven to eight hours each night, corresponding nicely with all the research findings discussed above.

Your best bet?

Listen to your body!

If you still feel tired and fuzzy headed when the alarm goes off, you probably aren't getting sufficient sleep.

Can't Sleep? Try Something New...

If you have trouble sleeping, take advantage of some of the many practical solutions I've outlined in my 33 Secrets to a Good Night's Sleep, which include:

Avoid before-bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars. This will raise blood sugar and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low (hypoglycemia), you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.

Sleep in complete darkness or as close as possible. If there is even the tiniest bit of light in your room it can disrupt your circadian rhythm and your pineal gland's production of melatonin and serotonin.

No TV right before bed. Even better, get the TV out of the bedroom or even out of the house, completely. It is too stimulating to your brain and it will take longer to fall asleep.

Wear socks to bed. Due to the fact that they have the poorest circulation, your feet often feel cold before the rest of your body. A study has shown that wearing socks reduces night wakings

Get to bed as early as possible. Our systems, particularly our adrenals, do a majority of their recharging or recovering during the hours of 11PM and 1AM.

Keep the temperature in the bedroom no higher than 70 degrees F. Many people keep their homes and particularly the upstairs bedrooms too hot.

Eat a high-protein snack several hours before bed. This can provide the L-tryptophan need to produce melatonin and serotonin.

In addition, you can use Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). It effectively addresses emotional reasons for insomnia. See Using EFT for Insomnia.

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