

Sleep Times



Did You Know

Since the mid-seventies, the prevalence of being overweight has increased sharply for children, adolescents and adults.

For children, aged 2-5 years, being overweight increased from 5% to 13.9%.

For children, aged 6-11 years, from 6.5% to 18.8%.

For adolescents, aged 12-19 years, from 5% to 17.4%

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Message from the President

We hear and read a lot about today's obesity epidemic. Much of the talk is about improving eating habits to lose weight while increasing daily exercise. Both are very important in addressing the problem. However, little has been said about the link between overweight and sleep deprivation, so we have devoted this newsletter to recent studies and articles discussing this important connection.

Sincerely,
Mary O'Sullivan
President

Short Sleep Linked With Obesity Among Suburban High School Students

Suburban high school students in the US who do not get enough sleep may be at increased risk of being overweight, according to a report by researchers at Case School of Medicine in Cleveland, OH. In the study, 529 students answered questions about lifestyle and sleep. The researchers found that 90% of students reported an average sleep time of less than 6 hours.

They also found that 20% of those who reported sleeping less than 6 hours were overweight, and that their overweight status was significantly associated with male gender, increased caffeine consumption, and short sleep. Moreover, the association between short sleep and being overweight was dose dependent (i.e. the shorter the sleep, the more likely the student was overweight), suggesting a significant link between sleep duration and being overweight.

NSF Alert, March 6, 2007

Children, Obesity and Sleep

Our children are becoming increasingly overweight. Their ever-expanding waistlines put them at risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and high blood

Among adults, aged 20-74 years, the prevalence of obesity increased from 15% (in 1976 -1980 survey) to 32.9% (in 2003-2004 survey).

Source: CDC

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pressure. But there is another problem, often over-looked, accompanying the grim statistics from the U.S. Surgeon General's Office. Those extra pounds also put children at risk for sleep apnea, a serious, debilitating, and potentially life-threatening sleep disorder, according to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF).

Sleep apnea is characterized by brief but numerous involuntary breathing pauses during sleep. These breathing pauses cause awakenings throughout the night, making it impossible for sleep apnea sufferers to enjoy a night of deep, restorative sleep. People with sleep apnea often feel sleepy during the day, and their concentration and daytime performance suffer.

While being overweight or obese are risk factors for sleep apnea, being thin can also put one at risk. Sleep apnea, generally considered a problem for middle-aged men, can be a problem for youngsters too. "With the increasing rates of obesity in children, it's likely there also will be an increase in sleep apnea," said Jodi A. Mindell, PhD, a pediatric sleep expert and professor of psychology at St. Joseph's University Hospital in Philadelphia, in an article published by the NSF in August, 2003.

The repercussions of sleep apnea and poor sleep for children are vast. When children do not get the sleep they need, difficulties in school are often the result, and their sleep deprivation is often overlooked or attributed to attention-deficit or behavior problems. Lack of adequate sleep also affects their ability to learn and remember and puts their health and safety at risk.

Adapted from "Children, Obesity and Sleep," Jodi A. Mindell, Associate Director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Children's Hospital, Philadelphia, PA

Get Your Sleep to Avoid Adding 2 Pounds a Year

Lack of sleep has been linked to everything from heart disease to a weakened immune system to a bad mood. And now a 16-year study on sleep has added weight gain to the list.

Recent research tracked the sleep habits of nearly 70,000 women and found that those who slept 5 hours or less a night were 32% more likely than those who slept 7 hours or more, to experience a major weight gain of 33 pounds or more – about 2 pounds a year.

"Although 1 to 2 pounds per year doesn't seem like a lot, over 10 years this really adds up," says Sanjay Patel, M.D., lead researcher of the study and assistant professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. "And even a weight gain of 10 pounds has a large effect on increasing your risk of developing diabetes and other complications related to obesity like high blood pressure and heart disease."

So what's a healthy amount of sleep? Get at least 7-8 hours every night (1hour of sleep for every 2 hours of awake time) to optimize your health and daily performance.

Adapted from "FitSmart," Jorge Cruise, [USA Weekend](#), April, 27-29, 2007

The Sleep and Weight Gain Connection

Overweight and obesity are chronic conditions that are the result of energy

imbalance. It's simple to understand how the body balances energy by thinking of a scale. When the calories we consume are greater than our physical activity, we gain weight.

Several factors influence weight gain: personal behavior towards food, lifestyle, sleep deprivation and genetics. Although genetics plays a role in being overweight, the main reasons for weight gain are lifestyle, including lack of physical activity, inadequate sleep and poor eating habits. Many of us tend to skip meals, especially breakfast, or eat meals that are too large. We also eat too many high calorie/ high fat/ high sugar/ high carb foods, which we prepare ourselves, or we consume a large number of fast foods, soft drinks and other high carb foods. When we become sleep deprived and feel tired throughout the day, we crave high calorie/ high carb foods, such as cookies, candy and snacks to provide quick energy. *Why do we crave them?*

When we don't get adequate sleep, blood levels of the key appetite-stimulating hormone, *ghrelin*, are elevated. Excesses of this hormone cause the level of the stop-eating hormone, *leptin*, to drop significantly. The result: an increase in appetite and cravings for high calorie/ high sugar/ high fat foods.

"Poor Sleep Related to Weight Gain, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes," Quanta Dynamics, Inc., 2006

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