

Sleep Times



Did You Know

The Dramatic Increase in Overweight Children

- Data from a comparison of National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys show that the number of U.S. children and adolescents that are overweight has more than doubled between a 1971-74 survey and a 2003-04 survey.
- For children ages 2 to 5 years, the prevalence of overweight children increased from 5% to 13.9%.
- For children 6 to 11 years, the prevalence of overweight children increased from 4% to 18.8%.

In this Issue:

- **Message from the President**
- **Is Obesity Contagious?**
- **Short Sleep Linked with Obesity Among Suburban High School Students**
- **Study: More Sleep May Lower Kids' Obesity Risk**
- **Short Sleep and TV a Recipe for Overweight Kids**
- **Does Short Sleep Increase Belly Fat in Kids?**

Message from the President

This month's newsletter highlights new studies about the epidemic of obesity. Lots of information is now available about how it is caused by lack of exercise and overeating, but these new studies also cite that a major contributing factor to this epidemic is the lack of adequate sleep.

Sincerely,
Mary O'Sullivan
President

Is Obesity Contagious?

You're more likely to become obese if you have a sibling, spouse or friend who is obese, say researchers who tracked more than 12,000 people who participated in the Framingham Heart Study from 1971- 2003. But not all friends are equal.

Women are influenced by other women only if they are mutual friends, the researchers found. Men are influenced by other men whether or not the friendship is mutual – that is, even if only one of the two identifies the other as a friend. And friends of the opposite sex have no impact.

The likeliest explanation: "People come to think that it is okay to be bigger, and this sensibility spreads," says co-author Nicholas Christakis of the Harvard Medical School. What to do: Don't worry that you'll 'catch' obesity like you can catch a cold. But be aware that a friend's weight may influence your thinking and eating. Of course, there's always the flip side. Maybe your example will get your friends to move more, eat less and get more sleep.

Nutrition Action HealthLetter, October, 2007. Adapted from: New England Journal of Medicine, 357: 370, 404, 2007

- And for adolescents, 12 to 19 years, the prevalence of being overweight increased from 6.1% to 17.4%.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Value of Sleep

- Feel better
- Have more energy
- Get more done
- Think more clearly
- **Live life more safely**
- Have better relationships
- Enjoy life more...

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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 recent 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 eight hours on school nights, and that 19% reported less than six hours. (Recommended hours of sleep for teens are about nine.) They also found that 20% of those who reported sleeping less than six 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.

Adapted from: "NSF Alert," April 24, 2007

Study: More Sleep May Lower Kids' Obesity Risk

Here's another reason to get the kids to bed early: more sleep may lower their risk of becoming obese. A recent Chicago study, appearing in the November, 2007 Journal of Pediatrics, analyzed data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. The study's objective was to see if there was a potential association between sleep duration and problems with overweight risk in children.

Researchers found that every additional hour per night a third grader spends sleeping reduces the child's chances of being obese in the sixth grade by 40%. "The less sleep they got, the more likely the children were to be obese in sixth grade, no matter what their weight was in the third grade," said Dr. Julie Lumeng of the University of Michigan, who led the research.

The magic number for the third graders was 9 hours and 45 minutes of sleep. Sleeping even more hours lowered the risk significantly. "Lack of sleep plays havoc with two hormones that are the 'yin and yang' of appetite regulation," said endocrinologist Eve Van Cauter of the University of Chicago, who was not involved with the study. In experiments by Van Cauter and others, sleep-deprived adults produced more ghrelin, a hormone that promotes hunger, and less leptin, a hormone that signals fullness.

The study explains an important preventative approach to overweight may be to ensure adequate sleep in childhood. Another explanation is that tired kids are less likely to exercise and more likely to sit on the couch and eat cookies, Dr. Lumeng said. The results of the study give parents further permission to enforce consistent bedtimes, reduce sweets, restrict caffeine amounts, and remove the TV from the bedroom.

Adapted from article written by Carla K. Johnson, Associated Press, November 1, 2007

Short Sleep and TV a Recipe for Overweight Kids

Like many parts of the world, Southern India has seen a sharp rise in childhood obesity in recent years. In an effort to understand the factors involved with the childhood obesity epidemic, researchers in Bangalore City studied the patterns of eating, sleeping, daily activity and television viewing in 598 children, aged 6-16 years.

They found there was a significant association between being overweight and increased television viewing, eating fried foods and decreased sleep duration.

Adapted from: "NSF Alert," October 2, 2007

Does Short Sleep Increase Belly Fat in Kids?

We know that recent research suggests that insufficient sleep may contribute to weight gain in children. Now a new study finds that the short sleep/weight gain association may be specifically related to an increase in abdominal fat.

The study involved 422 children who were evaluated for sleep duration, body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference. The results revealed that sleep duration was significantly associated with waist circumference. That association also remained after adjustment for BMI and other factors, such as parent income/education, frequency of television viewing, and playing sports outside of school.

Adapted from: "NSF Alert," November 20, 2007

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