

## **THE BENEFITS OF SLEEP FOR OPTIMUM HEALTH**

**By Dr. Michael John Badanek, BS, DC, CNS, CTP, DACBN, DCBCN, MSGR./CHEV**

Patients I have treated or currently being treated for many health challenges have a common symptom of chronic sleep deprivation. There are many health challenges which occur with a lack of proper sleep habits. We will discuss in this article the reasoning as to **WHY you** must get six to eight hours of uninterrupted sleep per night or day to maintain good health and a strong immune system.

Americans seem to hate sleep. Unlike our Mediterranean counterparts, we don't have siestas, we don't take naps, and the less we sleep, the prouder we seem to be of ourselves, regarding our sleeplessness as proof of just how industrious we Americans are. The result? Forty million men and women in this country are chronically sleep deprived. Think this doesn't affect your health and your waistline? Think again.

Disruptions in sleep, getting too little sleep and having your circadian rhythms interrupted have all been implicated as contributing factors to type 2 diabetes and obesity. This is likely due to the fact that not sleeping enough, even for one night, has negative impacts on your neuroendocrine system that cause you to feel hungrier and eat more as hunger hormones become altered – increasing ghrelin and decreasing leptin. Restricting sleep to as little as 5 hours nightly reduces insulin sensitivity, sets off systemic inflammation and puts you at increased risk of mortality by all causes.

Scientists have learned that kids who stay up late to play video games are at an additional risk for obesity from the sleep deprivation itself. A recent study concluded that compared with decreased sleep, increased sleep duration in school-age children resulted in lower reported food intake, lower fasting leptin levels, and lower weight. And other researchers recently observed that chronic sleep curtailment from infancy to school age was associated with higher overall and belly fat in mid-childhood – a fact further confirmed by yet another study. The potential role of sleep duration in pediatric obesity prevention and treatment warrants further study.

A 2010 study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine put all of these data in perspective. Investigators at the University of Chicago demonstrated that

insufficient\_sleep undermines dietary efforts to reduce overall body fat. They conducted clinical trials in 10 overweight, nonsmoking adults who underwent 14 days of moderate calorie restriction with either 8.5 or 5.5 hours of nighttime sleep. Sleep curtailment decreased the portion that lost weight as fat and increased the loss of lean muscle mass. The scientists also found those who were sleep deprived experienced body weight set point adaptations that shifted them toward a state mimicking caloric deprivation: increased hunger and a relative decrease in fat oxidation. In fact, those who slept 8.5 hours burned twice as much fat as the 5.5 hour group. And over a year, the 8.5 hour group lost an average of 10 more pounds than the 5.5 hour group and preserved twice as much lean body mass.

There are no questions about it: Sleep deprivation compromises your efforts to lose weight. Your goal should be to get 7 to 9 hours of deep, restful sleep nightly. If you think you don't have the time to sleep that much, I suggest you rethink that position and make sleep a priority over other activities. Sacrificing sleep for the sake of productivity is seriously overrated. It's great to want to be more productive. But how much do you think you'll get done if your health suffers? Sleep deprivation has been linked to a number of adverse health conditions. Even evening shift workers have increased inflammatory markers portending adverse health outcomes, and health-care shift workers aren't immune to these adverse effects of circadian rhythm disruption. Whatever it is you are working on can wait a few hours.

On the other hand, if you have trouble getting or staying asleep at night, don't despair. Some simple interventions can improve the quality of your sleep and make it easier to fall sleep and stay that way. Most people with sleep problems are engaged in negative lifestyle or behavior habits prohibiting them from getting enough good sleep. You can change this by improving your sleep hygiene, and it isn't hard to do. Here are some tips to help you improve your sleep hygiene starting tonight.

***Create a sleep ritual.*** Doing the same thing before bed every night helps remind your body that it's time to go to sleep. You might change into pajamas, brush your teeth, turn out the lights, spread back the covers, or any other number of things. Just keep it consistent.

***Relax before bed.*** Try doing something relaxing every night 30 to 60 minutes before bed. You could try some deep breathing, mindfulness meditation, visualization, or even a little light, relaxing stretching.

***Go to bed earlier.*** If you need more sleep, it's probably best to go to bed earlier. Try climbing into bed 10 or 15 minutes earlier each week until you're enjoying 7 to 9 hours of shut-eye.

***Don't stress before bed.*** Getting stressed before you go to bed won't help you sleep better. Think of how many ways we amp up our stress hormones right before bedtime; watching the evening news or violent TV shows, surfing the Net, even checking email. Try to make rational decisions about using electronic devices, and stay away from alcohol as well as caffeine and other stimulants.

***Sleep in a completely dark room.*** Light alters your circadian rhythms and may make it difficult to get or stay asleep – not just the lamps in your bedroom but also those little lights from phones, computers, TV's, DVD players, clocks, streetlamps, and more. get blackout blinds for your windows if you need them. Turn your phone off and point your alarm away from the bed. if you have a computer, TV, or DVD player in your room, plug it into a power strip you can shut off easily before you go to bed. For millennia, humans went to sleep when it was dark. that ancient way of living is stenciled into our DNA. Respect your circadian rhythms and provide them the dark they need.

***Experiment with naps (if you can).*** For some naps can actually improve nighttime sleep. For example, if you've learned to rely on a coffee at 2:00p.m. to get through your day, you may find that a 20-minute nap does a better job of rejuvenating you without that jolt of caffeine. On the other hand, if you have a hard time sleeping already, napping during the day may not be the ticket. Try naps if you can and see if they work for you.

***Drink a cup of tart cherry juice.*** A small randomized clinical trial recently found that insomniacs who drank a cup of tart cherry juice daily (in the morning and evening) increased their sleep time by nearly 90 minutes. The scientists hypothesize it's because the juice inhibits an enzyme that degrades tryptophan – an essential amino acid in your body's production of melatonin the master circadian rhythm hormone. Speaking of which...

***Try melatonin.*** Supplemental melatonin can help put your sleep rhythms back on track and may provide support for people who either don't make enough or need to replete their levels. Try 1 to 3 milligrams 60 to 90 minutes before bedtime.

***No electrical appliances that are in the bedroom plugged in while sleeping.*** You must be aware of EMF exposure (electromagnetic frequencies) which effect the parasympathetic nervous system must be in full operation with getting the proper sleep and healing while sleeping.

***Checking and treating the cortisol levels.*** The Adrenal Glands must be functioning properly for cortisol levels to be at their lowest levels for proper sleep patterns. The ephinephrine and norepinephrine also produced by the adrenal glands must be at optimal levels for proper sleep cycles and healing.

As you can see, your sleep cycles are very important for proper health and vitality. We humans sleep roughly 1/3 of our life while alive and proper/uninterrupted sleep is as essential for the healthy body as good food and water.

**Dr. Badanek has been and currently is 37 years into active/private practice in the Ocala/Marion County, Florida region. Find him online at [Dr.Badanek.com](http://Dr.Badanek.com) and [www.alternativewholistic.com](http://www.alternativewholistic.com), and see what the facility has to offer the sick and health challenged. To schedule an appointment call 352-622-1151**

