

SLEEP? IT'S EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU THOUGHT.



Do you want to lose weight? Do you want to maintain your healthy weight loss? It's been long believed that diet and exercise were the two mainstays of successful weight management. However, based on the results of new research, it turns out that sleep is equally important.

You've been sleeping every day of your life. Sometimes you sleep when you don't want to; sometimes you want to sleep but can't. And, some people take medication to achieve it.

Sleep does more than just provide relief from being tired. Everybody sleeps to one degree or another, and sleep plays an important role in people's mental, emotional and physical health.

Sleep and Eating

When you don't sleep well and are tired the next day, you could experience emotional distress, reduced coping abilities and decreased mental strength to remain compliant. Sleeping helps to replenish coping skills. When coping skills are depleted, life's stressors tend to take on a greater intensity, increasing negative feelings like anger, frustration, and stress. This often leads to using food as a tool. Generally, healthy foods are not desired; instead, high sugar, high carb foods are sought to boost energy. This would derail your weight loss program.

The Hormone Connection

Researchers have discovered important hormonal links between sleep and weight. When there is insufficient sleep, the body produces more of the hormone ghrelin and less of the hormone leptin. These two hormones regulate appetite. Ghrelin stimulates appetite and leptin sends a signal to your brain when you are full. So in effect, when you don't get enough sleep, you feel hungrier, and have less awareness of feeling full.

Getting the Sleep You Need

- Sleep is important to the short and long-term success of weight management. If you are having problems getting enough sleep, consider the following tips:
- Establish a regular bedtime routine. A routine will signal your body that it's time for sleep.
 - Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing and progressive relaxation.
 - Don't exercise before bedtime.
 - Keep your bedroom dark and cool.
 - Limit caffeine intake.
 - If you are troubled about something, get up and write about it until you become bored with the subject, instead of lying in bed and focusing on the problem.
 - Don't try to sleep unless you're sleepy.
 - If you don't fall asleep within 30 minutes, get out of bed and read, or do an activity that you find relaxing. Your bed needs to be associated with sleep, not frustration.
 - Eat enough earlier in the evening so you don't go to bed hungry.
 - Don't use alcohol to promote sleep. Alcohol may help you feel sleepy after you drink it, but it actually interferes with REM sleep causing you to feel more tired in the morning.
 - Avoid long naps. Napping is OK for many people as long as the naps are short—30 to 45 minutes—and don't happen after mid-afternoon.
 - Finally, if you have chronic insomnia, see a counselor who can provide Cognitive Behavioral Therapy techniques.

Activity: What Will You do if You Have a Sleepless Night?

In the space below, please list three strategies you can use when you are having problems falling asleep. Feel free to list your own strategies

1.

2.

3.

Bottom line is that if you continue to struggle with sleep issues make all efforts to see a doctor who is boarded in sleep medicine. It can make all the difference.