The relationship between sleep and weight loss is very important. A major part of losing weight and keeping it off is control of appetite and satiety. Even when following the perfect diet and exercise plan, a lack of appetite control can make any attempt at weight loss an uphill battle. It is recommended that each person get at least 8 hours of sleep every night.

Sleep Deprivation and Appetite

The two hormones most associated with appetite and hunger are ghrelin and leptin. When you don’t get enough sleep, it drives leptin levels down, which means you don’t feel satisfied after you eat. Lack of sleep also causes ghrelin levels to rise, which means your appetite is stimulated which causes you to want more food. Cortisol is a hormone that is commonly released in response to physical and emotional stress and when deprived of sleep, there is an increase of cortisol released which makes us feel hungry even if we are full.

Sleep Deprivation and Metabolism

Sleep loss results in less sleep. Losing deep sleep hours decreases growth hormone levels. Growth hormone is a protein that helps regulate the body’s proportions of fat and muscle in adults. With less growth hormone, we reduce the ability to lose fat and grow muscle.

With a loss of sleep, your body may not be able to metabolize carbohydrates as well, which leads to an increased storage and higher levels of blood sugar. Excess blood sugar can lead to insulin resistance which means that the body has trouble disposing of glucose in the liver and other tissues. This can be a trigger for health problems such as obesity, heart disease and Type II diabetes.

A lack of sleep goes hand in hand with a lack of energy. We don’t burn as many calories without a proper amount of sleep.

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**4 B’s for Healthy Sleep for Kids**

1.) **Bathing** A bath or shower is the perfect way of starting a bedtime routine and separating the evening’s activities from sleeping. The start of a bedtime routine should be about 30 minutes for younger kids and up to 1 hour for teenagers.

2.) **Brushing** While in the bathroom, brush those pearly white teeth. This is a good health habit and helps not to snack or eat right before bedtime. Kids are usually tired or sleepy more than they are hungry anyway.

3.) **Books/Music** Books and/or music can serve as the perfect cue that it’s time to cuddle up and go to sleep. Think about what happens when you’re tired and you try to read? Bingo—you fall asleep. Any TV, computer or video game time needs to be finished BEFORE the bedtime routine starts. Having a TV in your child’s bedroom serves as a distraction, leads to disrupted sleep patterns and alone is a risk factor for pediatric obesity.

4.) **Bedtime** Once you’ve set the stage so that bathing, brushing, and books signal bedtime, you should just let your child fall asleep independently. Sure, this may involve some additional protests which simply just need to be added to the routine such as getting a drink of water. We have always found that if you do a good job of making the bed, your kids will learn to sleep in it.
Snooze to Lose

Common Causes of Sleep Deprivation

- Stress or anxiety
- Illness
- Noise
- Light
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Stimulant medications

Methods for Improving Sleep

1.) Develop a sleep and awake pattern that fits your schedule
   Try getting up at the same time every day. Avoid naps, unless you normally take one. Try to get the same sleep every night. Find out what works for you and stick with it.

2.) Ritualize your cues for good sleep
   Use the bedroom only for sleep. Keep the room quite, dark and cool. Go to bed only when you’re sleepy.

3.) Relax
   Try to understand what your worries may be and try to develop good coping mechanisms throughout the day so that your mind doesn’t wonder at night with your worries.

4.) Resist temptation
   Try to refrain from alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine which can all interfere with sleep.

5.) Skip the sugar
   High sugar and high fat snacks may make your feel drowsy, but when your blood sugar falls a few hours later, you’ll wake up hungry and may have trouble falling back asleep. Going to bed hungry isn’t a good option either because if you haven’t had enough to eat, your brain will stay alert until you do eat. Try to focus on a high protein dinner to help blood sugar levels remain stable throughout the night.

6.) Get moving
   Take a walk, ride, or swim for 20-30 minutes or as tolerated 3-4 times per week. Exercise will help you fall asleep faster and sleep longer than if you don’t exercise at all. Exercise increases your endorphins (your brain’s “feel good” chemicals). Exercise will also help you to better cope with your stresses that may be keeping you from getting a good night’s sleep.

*You should consult with your physician or other health care professional before starting an exercise or diet regimen to determine if it is right for your needs. This is particularly true if you have a history of high blood pressure, heart disease, or if you have experienced chest pain*