

Health Consequences Of Poor Sleep

BAD

~~GOOD
MORNING~~

let the stress begin...



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Introduction

At one time or another in our lives, we've all experienced the frustration associated with a poor night's sleep. The restless nights when counting sheep become as endless as counting stars. Likely, the next day was met with numerous cups of coffee and yawns. Imagine experiencing that zombie-like feeling daily. Surely, you would tremble at the thought.

Most people would probably agree that it is necessary for everyone to get a full night's rest, while others will tell you that they can function just fine with only a few hours.

So, how important is it that you get the appropriate amount of sleep? The answer to this question is very important. Not getting enough sleep can have a major effect on your health. Even though people may feel as though a lack of sleep is not affecting them in any way, chances are, you are experiencing one or more of the consequences, whether they be big or small.

Sleep is essential to our health, ability to function and productivity. Sleep deprivation can result in many serious health problems like and should be avoided at all costs.

According to studies, 6 hours or less of sleep can result in the equivalent of two nights of sleep deprivation. Sleep "debt" is a real thing and the less of it you get; the more you must sleep to make up for it because it accumulated with every night of sleep deprivation.

Sadly, at least 50 million Americans suffer from a chronic lack of sleep according to a notable study. The immediate effects associated with a lack of sleep may seem temporary. However, did you know that losing out on your beauty rest could be the underlying cause of critical issues?

21 Health Consequences Of Poor Sleep

Let's consider the serious health consequences associated with a lack of sleep.

Brain And Emotional Functioning

Anxiety and Stress

Anxiety is a common consequence of poor sleep, The National Sleep foundation reports that researchers have discovered that people with insomnia are 17 times as likely to have anxiety than those who can achieve the recommended hours of sleep. Of course, anxiety means more stress, and not getting adequate rests is hardly conducive to making sound plans in managing stress in general.

Depression

The National Sleep Foundation says that individuals who have poor sleep health are 10 times as likely to experience clinical depression. Sadly, the more often you experience insomnia, the higher your risk of developing depression.

Impaired Focus And Cognition

It is estimated that about 40 U.S. dollars are lost annually due to a lack of productivity at work. Could this be attributed to the 50 million or so Americans functioning off little sleep? When you are tired and groggy, you are unable to perform at your optimal level.

This leads to an impaired judgment which directly hinders your ability to make sound decisions. In fact, countless car accidents are a result of people falling asleep at the wheel or simply driving carelessly.

According to Mayo Clinic, simulation tests demonstrate that sleep-deprived people perform hand-eye coordination tasks as badly as or worse than intoxicated people. However, it doesn't stop there. People with poor sleep quality have an increased inability to concentrate, and zero capacity to form or retain memories.

Weakens Memory

In order to adequately take in information and store it for future use, you have to be able to focus. As we learned previously, sleep deprivation directly influences our ability to focus. When this occurs, we are unable to process new information nor store it for future use. We may notice small changes in our memory such as forgetting deadlines, names, and even important events.

Brain Damage

Although you might think your decision to forgo sleep will only create temporary problems, Swedish researchers found that long-term sleep problems can lead to some degree of neural injury and even contribute to brain shrinkage.

According to Shape Magazine, this adverse effect combined with the increase in the levels of a toxic protein known as beta-amyloid can boost your risk for brain conditions such as Dementia and Alzheimer's.

Poor Moods

We all know how a child reacts when they miss their afternoon nap. As adults, our system reacts in a similar way when we lose sleep. Mentally, we are exhausted which leads to irritation, outbursts of anger and even depression. Our will to accomplish our tasks is reduced which may lead to feelings of tension, anxiety, and worthlessness. We may also be prone to showing aggression to others due to our agitated state.

Impairs Alertness and Reaction Time

WebMD reports that without adequate sleep, our ability to respond or react sharply decreases by as much as 32%. It's no wonder that so many accidents occur as a result of fatigue. According to Sleep.org, the loss of just 19 hours of sleep can leave you comparable to a drunk.

Decision Making and Problem-Solving

The ability to make firm, and well-thought-out decisions is limited because of poor sleep habits. Studies show that the frontal and parietal lobes of your brain, also known as decision-making centers, slow in activity.

Physical

Stress

When you're experiencing excessive sleep loss, your body is under a great deal of stress, which means your body is flooded with the stress hormone Cortisol. In a chronic state of stress, cortisol never leaves your body and this along with other harmful stress hormones causes a constant state of arousal that causes inflammation and has numerous detrimental effects on the mind and body. The truth is stress kills and regular healthy sleep is one of the key steps in an effective stress management plan.

Cardiovascular Disease

Lack of sleep could lead to a host of heart-related issues. The National Sleep Foundation reports that individuals who experience less sleep experience issues with glucose metabolism and blood pressure. These disruptions within the body, when left untreated, could eventually lead to heart failure, heart attacks, and strokes. The American Heart Association cites an irregular sleep pattern as being the trigger for multiple cardiovascular problems.

High Blood Pressure

Poor sleep may raise blood pressure, adding to other existing cardiac woes. If you are experiencing blood pressure problems and sleep issues, you may want to seek the attention of a sleep specialist to rule out sleep apnea.

Type 2 Diabetes

Our bodies react to sleep loss in a myriad of ways, but nothing is perhaps more amazing than the poor impact sleep can have on insulin production. WebMD reports that poor sleep can increase your risk of developing diabetes. The reason for the enhanced risk has everything to do with what it is we are putting into our bodies.

When we are tired or too fatigued to prepare healthy meals, it is in our very nature to gravitate towards those foods that can cause our sugar levels to rise rapidly. It's not all about what we eat, but our bodies response. Sleep.org reports that when we don't sleep, our body isn't always clear about what it should be doing with the insulin. This confusion contributes to a reduced production of insulin or insulin resistance.

Skin Damage

Do you ever notice how those dark circles suddenly appear under your eyes after a terrible night's sleep? Constant lack of sleep could be the blame for those and unhealthy skin. Much like your inner organs, your skin needs time to rest and recuperate. Also, since lack of sleep increases stress, the stress hormone cortisol is like a suction cup for skin elasticity. It slows down the creation of collagen thus creating lines, dark spots, and acne. They don't call it "beauty rest" for nothing.

Leads To Obesity

Author and wellness expert Dr. Michael Breus explains how our body reacts when surviving off little sleep. "Ghrelin is the 'go' hormone that tells you when to eat, and when you are sleep-deprived, you have more ghrelin." This encourages binge and mindless eating in order to fulfill that need. You are also less likely to go to the gym or eat nourishing foods due to your lack of energy. As this pattern persists, weight gain is inevitable.

According to the Harvard Medical School, when you don't sleep enough, you are also more likely to shy away from healthy vegetables and protein and lean more towards fatty foods and sugar. Couple this with feelings of fatigue and the desire to exercise flies out of the window.

Poor Hand and Eye Coordination

Sleep deprivation can affect primary motor skills functions, making some events awkward in execution, so if you are sleep deprived it's best to avoid activities that require hand and eye coordination.

Weakened Immune System

Loss of sleep decreases our ability to fight off sickness. As mentioned, your body never has the opportunity to rejuvenate itself therefore, your immune system is going on "overdrive" in a sense. Eventually, you will become more susceptible to colds, sicknesses, and bacteria. It will become much harder for your body to defend itself against these viruses.

Addiction Risks

When losing sleep becomes a habit, many people turn to sleeping aids to help them sleep through the night. Although usage of sleeping pills, when prescribed by a doctor is necessary for some, these medications are highly addictive. The sedative feeling accompanied by an already vulnerable brain can be a recipe for disaster.

Excessive Alcohol Usage

Lack of sleep can have serious consequences that affect our mood. This can increase your chance of developing depression. Unfortunately, because of these depressive symptoms, many rely on alcohol to cope. In addition, alcohol can have sedative effects that make falling asleep easier. When every night you're relying on a glass of wine to help you sleep, there may be a dependency problem brewing.

Increased Headaches

Poor sleeping habits could be the reason behind the chronic head pain. Research conducted by Dr. Paul Durham at Missouri State University found direct correlations between sleep deprivation and migraines.

He explains, " In stressful situations such as sleep deprivation, these arousal proteins occur at levels that are high enough to trigger pain."

Essentially, our body produces a series of hormones that either raise or lower our pain triggers depending on the amount of sleep we receive. Many who experience chronic sleep loss, report having frequent migraines with great intensity.

Affects Your Sex Drive

Men and women may experience lower libidos or a lack of interest in sex according to sleep specialists. This side effect is mainly due in part to inadequate energy levels, feeling tired, and higher levels of tension.

Reduce Quality of Life

Considering the many ways that poor sleep affects the body, mind and spirit it is evident that continuous sleep deprivation will affect your quality of life, making it more difficult to function, be productive and be well.

Why We Need Sleep

People may be wondering how losing out on sleep can cause all these health issues. The reason your body and mind can start to become affected by a lack sleep is because sleep is something we all need.

While we sleep our body is restoring and strengthening itself. With this being the case, it should be easy to understand why a person's body may seem to be failing when they have not slept because they do not have that much needed time to restore and strengthen.

Along with allowing people to restore and strengthen their bodies, sleep also allows people to consolidate their memories. This is when the information that is taken in during the day is processed and taken from short-term memory to long-term memory.

This is why memory can be affected when a person does not sleep. There is less time for them to process thoughts and memories and place them in their long-term memory where they should be.

How Much Sleep Is Enough

The amount of sleep a person needs is dependent upon their age. For example, adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep every night, while children and teenagers need between eight and eleven.

If it is not possible for a person to get the full amount, they can at least make an attempt at sleeping the minimum number of hours, which in most cases is eight hours. The only time a person should get more than eleven hours of sleep is when they are an infant to one-years-old.

Should a person fail to get the recommended amount of sleep, they should expect to start to feel the consequences. When people don't get the sleep, they need on a daily basis, they often say that they will catch up on sleep and decide to sleep for more than the recommended amount of time when they do finally head to bed. There is no such thing as catching up on sleep, so people may want to start making time to get the sleep they need.

The abovementioned consequences of poor sleep are only a few of the many negatives. This should put it in perspective for those who don't believe that a lack of sleep will change the way they function.

With there being so many negative effects of not getting enough sleep, people should strongly consider getting the appropriate amount of sleep. You only have one life to live and if getting a little bit more sleep can help keep you healthy, then why not make this simple change?

10 Natural Ways To Sleep Better

We have all lived through the day after a terrible night's sleep. You were probably left struggling for energy, unable to focus, underproductive, irritable, and just downright exhausted. Yes, a good night's sleep is important and not just to what we've mentioned so far, but to your overall health and happiness.

Unfortunately, sleep problems are fairly common these days. It could be due to stress, the need to be connected constantly or other issues. What's important is that you have natural methods to turn to that will help you sleep better.

1.A Sleep Schedule

This should be the first step you take. Head to bed at the same time every evening and always get up at the same time, even if it's your day off. Getting into a sleep routine is what will keep your biological clock on track to ensure you get good sleep. Our bodies respond to the light of the morning and the dark of the evening, so if this is something you struggle with, consider a lamp that mimics natural light.

2.Quit Smoking

Are you a smoker? I have bad news for you. It might be what is keeping you up at night. Never forget, it's a stimulant! You know you have a problem if you wake up in the middle of the night with the urge to get up and smoke. Of course, smoking can also leave you prone to snoring, sleep apnea, and a variety of other breathing problems. So, if you want to get sleep – ditch smoking.

3.Get Some Exercise

Cardio exercise is great for improving not just the quality of your sleep, but the length of it, too. However, you should avoid working out within four hours of heading to bed. A good half hour workout will keep your temperature elevated for that long and as you start to cool your body will trigger the release of melatonin.

4.Kiss Caffeine Goodbye

You use it to wake up every morning and that's fine. However, if you are caught in the trap of fueling your day with caffeine because you're awake all night... well, I think I see the problem. Enjoy your coffee, have that cup of tea, hey, if you want a diet big gulp – go for it. Come 2 pm, cut it out. Caffeine can stay in your system for as many as eight hours, why take the risk?

5.Journal It

If your mind races as soon as you pull the covers up to your neck, then journaling might be the best move for you. Instead of allowing your stress and worry to consume you, take a minute to write down all those racing thoughts and get them out of your mind and off your chest.

6.Winding Down

You can't just go to bed and expect to fall asleep within minutes (though, some people do). You need to provide your body with a bit of transition. If you really struggle to sleep, you should give yourself at least an hour of winding down time before going to bed. You can spend 20 minutes preparing your work clothes and dealing with your lunch. Then spend 20 minutes following your nightly hygiene routine. With the last 20 minutes, though, you can either relax in bed, meditate or read.

7.Light Snacks

If your hunger pangs keep you up, try enjoying a snack about an hour or so before bed. There are some really good choices include a banana with a teaspoon of peanut butter or a piece of toasted whole grain bread with a slice of turkey.

8.Temperature

Being too warm will keep you awake, so if you can set your thermostat somewhere between 65 and 75 then you're helping your sleep. Just getting into a cool bed is enough to help reduce your temperature to a point your body produces melatonin.

9.Furry Friends

You love your pets but sleeping with them could be what's upsetting your sleeping patterns. Cats love to go a bit crazy at 3 am, while dogs snore, fart, and take up the entire bed.

10.Deep Breathing

A bit of deep breathing is a great way to reduce your blood pressure and heart rate. It also relaxes you, triggers the release of endorphins and gets you primed for sleep. So, inhale for five seconds, pause to the count of three, and exhale for five. Smooth and steady breaths win the race (to sleep).

Superfoods For Better Sleep

Now the issue with many people is actually “falling asleep.” For whatever reason some people just cannot get their zzzzz’s! This is a serious issue and can be remedied by making a few lifestyle changes.

FOOD... is a big factor in being able to fall asleep and getting good sleep at that!

Superfoods

Here are some “superfoods” you should consider consuming throughout the day and before bedtime:

- Almonds
- Milk
- Banana
- Complex Carbs (Sweet potato, oats)
- Cottage cheese
- Peanut butter

These are a few of the great (and preferred) foods to consume before bedtime if you want a nice easy transition into a deep sleep. Some people may not be able to consume some of these foods due to the way they react with each individual, but trial and error is a good idea.

These foods are healthy, but they also contain nutrients that are favorable for inducing sleep.

Food You Should Avoid If You Want To Sleep Better

Certain foods you should definitely not eat before bedtime due to ingredients, seasonings, interactions with the body, these include:

- Pizza
- Chips
- Coffee (Obvious)
- Citrus fruits
- Fried foods

You definitely don't want to be eating any of these foods before you sleep because the added sugars, acid, high-sugar and caffeine do a better job of keeping you awake.

Many of these foods are also unhealthy and should be limited altogether anyways so you don't want to be restless and carry the burden of bad health as well.

Benefits Of Better Sleep Through Eating Habits

Better sleep means better EVERYTHING!

When you don't get enough sleep, you're depriving your body of one of its most essential necessities.

The benefits of proper sleep are:

- Alertness
- Better memory
- Decreased stress, anxiety and depression
- Longer lifespan
- More energy

These are great benefits to getting better sleep and everyone should strive to do so for optimal health and lifestyle. Without sleep, you're essentially a zombie (Not safe or healthy) and that why paying attention to what you are consuming is extremely important.

Who doesn't want to live longer and be happier? Not many people!

Eat Your Way To Better Sleep

We as humans function in a specific manner and although everyone is different, our bodies work in a similar manner especially when it comes to what is good and bad for us. There's no question we all need sleep and it's pretty much the same for all of us.

Superfoods are a great way for anyone to improve their sleeping habits as they assist with the other processes in our bodies that keep us healthy and functioning.

Choosing the right foods is important and here we have given you some great options to choose from and see what works best for you. Some people may not be able to stomach certain foods and that's ok as there are many foods that will help you get better sleep.

Avoid the bad stuff if you want to avoid sleep deprivation because anything that interferes with your sleep is counter-productive to your health.

Eat healthy and sleep tight!

Final Thoughts

Developing poor sleeping habits causes more than just a heavy reliance on coffee. Although our society prides itself on not sleeping to get things done, this sad mentality is slowly killing us. If you're experiencing sleep deficiency, consult with your doctor on how much sleep you should be getting along with an effective program of treatment.

This will enable you to better understand what's best for your body. It's important to incorporate good sleeping habits to live a healthy and fulfilling life. Not to mention, nobody has ever complained about getting too much sleep!

Sleep well and goodnight!

Thank You

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