

FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

More and more studies are linking lack of sleep to weight gain. So many of us have problems falling asleep or staying asleep. When you sleep you have a decrease in leptin, the hormone that tells you when you are full and an increase in the hormone ghrelin, which makes you want to eat more. There have been over two dozen studies that show people weigh more when they sleep less, including a 16 year study of 70,000 women who slept 5 hours or less. They were 30% more likely to gain 30 plus pounds than those who got more rest.

Sleep deprivation wreaks havoc on these hormones that control appetite, craving and metabolism of fat.

When you are sleep deprived you crave simple carbs, or junk foods like chocolate, pastries, candy that can break down quickly to energy. But these foods are high in calories and fat and don't keep you full or energized for long and before you know it, you are eating again.

Also, when you sleep your brain secretes a growth hormone that tells your body how to break down fat for fuel. Deprived of sleep, your body stores extra calories as fat because there isn't enough of the growth hormone to break it down and your body takes short cuts and stores it in your belly or thighs, wherever you tend to put on weight.

So, how can we ensure we get enough sleep? First experiment with how much sleep you need, usually we need between 6 and 8 hours, but you will know when you wake up rested and when you need more sleep.

If you are still tired, try going to bed 15 minutes earlier for a few nights, until you wake up feeling rested.

Have a consistent bedtime routine- take warm bath or shower, read, stretch. Try to stay away from the television, computer and blackberry. Use your DVR and watch shows earlier in the evening.

Make sure you exercise during the day; it promotes a deeper restorative sleep at night. Keep away from alcohol for 3 hours before bed.

If you wake up during the night, don't turn on the light, light suppresses the secretion of melatonin, the hormone that tells your brain it's time to sleep. If you have to get up to go to the bathroom, make it quick, and don't check your phone! Don't look at the clock, not only will seeing the time get your brain working, the blue light on most digital clocks is alerting to the brain.

It's such a pleasure to help those closest to us become happier and healthier. Please forward this newsletter to friends, family members or colleagues who might be interested and inspired by it.

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