



# Sleep and Your Weight

## some facts

- Sleep-related problems affect 50-70 million Americans
- Nearly 65 million adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese
- Being overweight is a risk factor for sleep problems
- Estimated cost of obesity in the U.S. exceeds \$168 billion per year in medical expenses and reduced productivity

## Sleep

Sleep is a period of rest and rejuvenation for the brain and body. Proper sleep is essential to overall health.

Nearly everyone needs between 7 and 9 hours of quality sleep each night for good health. Many of us average less than the recommended amount. Some of us get poor quality sleep, which may be due to an underlying sleep disorder.

# sleep apnea

## What are some symptoms of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)?

- Snoring
- Feeling tired or sleepy during the day
- Nighttime gasping, choking or coughing
- Non-refreshing sleep
- Waking up frequently during the night to use the bathroom
- Morning headaches
- Trouble concentrating, forgetfulness
- Irritability, low mood
- Dry mouth or dry throat in the morning

## Sleep Disorders

Sleep disorders are medical problems that interfere with sleep by reducing either the amount or the quality of sleep. Sleep disorders may leave you feeling tired or fatigued during the day and affect your ability to concentrate and make decisions. Sleep disorders can have serious health consequences, including increased risk of weight gain, hypertension, heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

The good news? Most sleep disorders can be treated.

## Weight

Being overweight means having more body fat than is optimally healthy. People who are overweight are at a higher risk for sleep disorders.

For example, people with a Body Mass Index (BMI) over 30 are nearly one-and-a-half times more likely to have restless legs syndrome (an irresistible urge to move your legs at night) and up to 40% of overweight people have obstructive sleep apnea (a frequent closing of the throat causing breathing problems during sleep).

## The Sleep and Weight Connection

- Too little sleep or poor quality sleep may lead to weight gain.
- Sleep deprivation or poor quality sleep alters hormones that affect hunger and satiety (feeling full).
- Ghrelin is “the hunger hormone” and tells the brain when it is time to eat. Too little or poor quality sleep leads to increased ghrelin levels and increased appetite.
- Leptin is “the full hormone” and tells the brain we have had enough to eat. Too little sleep leads to decreased leptin levels and poor quality sleep (as in obstructive sleep apnea) prevents the body from reacting to leptin.

## What's Next?

Research has shown that treating certain sleep disorders may improve your ability to manage your weight. If you are having trouble sleeping, contact your physician or a sleep specialist for an evaluation.

## Diagnosing a Sleep Disorder

Diagnosis of a sleep disorder is usually simple and begins with a thorough review of your health history. It may also require an overnight sleep study for additional observation.

## The Sleep Study

Sleep tests can take place at home or at a sleep center in a private, hotel-like room. The test monitors and records sleep patterns, breathing and heart activity while you sleep. If you have the test in a sleep clinic, a specialist will monitor you from an adjoining control room, and will remain awake and available to you throughout the night.

## Treatment Options

After your sleep study, a report is sent to your referring or primary care physician. There are many treatment options available and recommendations will vary based on your diagnosis.

By successfully treating your sleep disorder, you may also notice the following benefits:

- Feeling more awake and alert during the day
- Increased motivation
- More energy during the day
- A greater sense of well-being
- Improved relationships
- Deeper, sounder sleep

the sleep  
study  
process



Physician  
evaluation



Getting ready for  
the sleep study



Sleeping during  
the sleep study



Physician reviewing  
sleep study results

## About Sleep HealthCenters®

Sleep HealthCenters is a network of sleep medicine centers that offers a comprehensive solution for the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders. To learn more about Sleep HealthCenters or for additional information about sleep and sleep disorders, please visit our website or call us toll-free.

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