

[IMAGE]

Too Little Sleeping = Too Much Snacking

By Editorial Staff

There are valid reasons for putting your kids to bed at a reasonable hour, not the least of which is that it guarantees them adequate sleep. It also conditions them to stick to a schedule and gives you a little much-needed time for yourself after tending to their needs all day.

Here's another important reason to get the kids off to bed: Too little sleep can lead to a bad habit: overeating. According to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, reduced sleep time (less than six hours compared with more than eight) is associated with an increase in energy consumption - often in the form of snacks - without any increase in energy expenditure. In other words, if kids sleep less, they tend to eat more, but don't expend energy during the extra time they're awake.

too much snacking - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark So, what could they possibly be doing that doesn't burn any energy? Perhaps they're studying for next week's exam or writing that long-overdue birthday card to grandma. But probably not. In fact, the chances are good that they're playing on the computer, watching television, "texting" their friends or pursuing some other sedentary activity, which is never a good thing, particularly when combined with additional caloric intake. That's a bad combination that could lead to chronic overeating and weight gain, not to mention fatigue, irritability, and reduced performance attributable to lack of sleep.

Too little sleep equals too much snacking, simply put. And by the way, that applies to adults, too. So put away the remote, keep the chips in the pantry and get a good night's sleep.

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