

[IMAGE]

Catch Up on Sleep, Lower Your Risk of Obesity

By Editorial Staff

We've been talking a great deal about sleep lately because, well, it's that important when it comes to your health. Sleep dysfunction (not getting enough on a regular basis, insufficient quality in terms of waking up refreshed and revived, irregular sleep patterns, etc.) has been linked to various negative health outcomes including lower academic performance, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Fortunately, new research suggests even people who don't get adequate sleep during the week can compensate for it by sleeping in on weekends - and the health benefit is a reduced risk of obesity (another negative attributed to chronic poor sleep). In the study, researchers evaluated more than 2,000 adults ages 19-82 to determine sleep habits (weekday vs. weekend) and various health conditions including obesity.

Nearly 50 percent of study subjects slept approximately 2 hours longer per weekend night compared to weeknights - but that extra weekend sleep time meant they slept more overall than subjects who didn't get any "catch up" sleep on weekends. The results: People who slept longer on weekends had a lower body-mass index (BMI), and the more catch-up sleep they got, the lower their BMI was, according to researchers.

So, what's the takeaway? First, sleep is important when it comes to your health. Second, you can reduce your risk of obesity (and perhaps other health issues related to inadequate sleep, we can speculate) by catching up on sleep, rather than trying to "fight through" those sleepless or reduced-sleep nights. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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