

[IMAGE]

Shift Your Sleep Schedule

By Editorial Staff

Could shifting your sleep schedule by a mere one hour a night reduce your risk of depression? Researchers investigated that potential by comparing sleep patterns among nearly 850,000 adults based on genetic predisposition (certain genes appear to influence our sleep habits, particularly our sleep timing preferences). In the largest sample evaluated, the average sleep midpoint was 3 a.m., meaning the average subject went to bed at around 11 p.m. every night and awoke at around 6 a.m.

Researchers then evaluated a different sample that included genetic information and information regarding diagnoses of major depressive disorder. They found that each one-hour-earlier sleep midpoint was associated with a 23 percent lower risk of depression.

sleep schedule - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark We already know how important consistent, adequate, restorative (uninterrupted) sleep is to our overall health, both in the short and long term. We're talking about irritability, reduced ability to concentrate and memory problems (short term) and long-term effects including weight gain, immune dysfunction and disease risk. With this study, findings from which appear in the journal *JAMA Psychiatry*, we now have a potential connection to sleep time (when we go to sleep and when we wake up) that provides even more insight into why sleep should be your #1 priority. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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