[IMAGE]

# The 5-Hour (Sleep) Mark

By Editorial Staff

If you're only "enjoying" five hours or less a night, your health is bound to suffer. That's because research implicates inadequate long-term sleep in chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. Let's look at why getting enough sleep matters so much.

Researchers conducted a 25-year study that evaluated average nightly sleep multiple times, beginning at age 50. Among more than 7,000 men and women, people who reported getting five hours or less of sleep per night had a higher risk of developing a first chronic disease compared to men and women who reported sleeping up to seven hours per night. Short sleepers with a first chronic disease also were more likely to develop a second chronic disease compared to adequate sleepers. Sleep duration was also associated with an increased risk of dying during the 25-year study period – which is understandable due to the presence of one or more chronic diseases.

Heart disease, diabetes and cancer weren't the only chronic diseases identified in the study; the researchers defined the presence of a chronic disease as any one of the following (in addition to the three already mentioned): stroke, heart failure, chronic kidney disease, COPD, liver disease, depression, dementia, other mental disorders, Parkinson's disease and arthritis / rheumatoid arthritis. Of course, you can't eliminate your risk of suffering any of the above, but getting enough sleep as often as possible sure seems like it can help! If you can't seem to fall asleep, stay asleep or get enough sleep, let your doctor know right away. Your conversation could be a life saver.

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