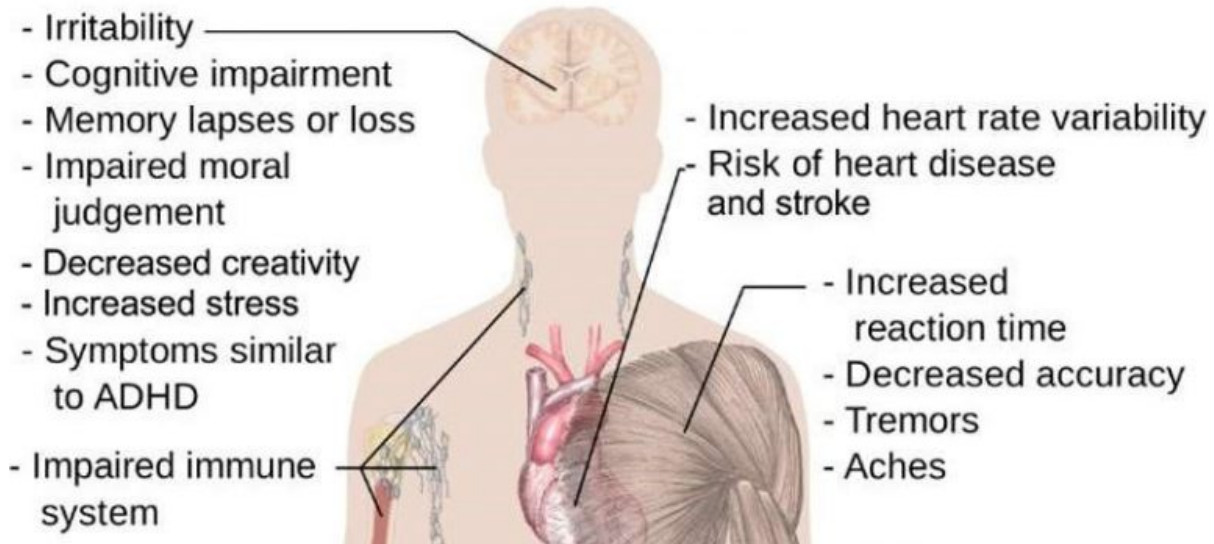


Why Lack of Sleep Can Cause Early Death, Cancer, Stroke and More According to Studies

 healthyandnaturalworld.com/sleep-deprivation

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SIDE EFFECTS FROM MISSING SLEEP



The effects of sleep deprivation can have serious consequences on your health. A lack of sleep can cause weight gain, high blood pressure, heart disease, and mood swings. One of the dangers of sleep deprivation is that a lack of sleep can make you sick. Not getting adequate sleep can even increase your risk of diseases such as cancer, and can lead to premature death.

Most people need between 7 or 8 hours of sleep each night. Having trouble falling asleep, waking up frequently during the night, or certain medications can hinder your sleep patterns. The effects of long-term sleep deprivation can cause you to feel constantly groggy, irritable, and in a bad mood.

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What can happen to your health if you regularly don't get enough sleep? In this article, you will find out what sleep deprivation does to your body. You will also learn how to improve your sleep quality to prevent the side effects of sleep deprivation.

What is Sleep Deprivation?

Sleep deprivation happens when you don't get enough sleep for your body to function properly.

Unfortunately, facts on the prevalence of sleep deprivation show that many of us are at risk from not getting enough sleep. Doctors from the NHS say that about 1 in 3 adults suffer from the consequences of sleep deprivation. (1)

The journal *PLoS One* says that you need between 7 and 8 hours of good quality sleep every night. Regularly sleeping less than 6 hours a night can put you at risk from the dangers of sleep deprivation such as diabetes, heart disease or stroke. (2)

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, getting enough sleep is essential for good health. Sleep is a basic need of the body, and the effects of sleep deprivation can be as serious as not eating or breathing. Not sleeping enough affects your physical and mental health and can lead to loss of productivity and serious injury. (3)

The effects of poor sleep can also build up over time. Although napping can help to reduce some of the effects of little sleep, it is not a substitute for getting a good night's sleep regularly.

There are also different stages to your sleep – rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and non-rapid eye movement sleep. REM sleep is generally the time when your brain is active during sleep and you dream. Non-REM sleep is a deeper sleep when your body and mind repair themselves. (21)

One study found that sleep deprivation during different sleep stages affects your mind in different ways. For example, loss of sleep in the REM stage can affect learning ability. (22)

Causes of Sleep Deprivation

There can be many reasons why you are not getting your required 7 or 8 hours of sleep every night.

Doctors from the Victoria State Government say that lifestyle choices often result in not getting enough sleep. Staying up late to socialize, watch TV, or work can start to impact negatively on your health. (4)

The physical symptoms of sleep deprivation could be felt if you have an underlying illness or take medication that causes insomnia. Also, taking stimulants such as alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or smoking before bedtime can result in poor sleep quality.

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Other reasons for being deprived of sleep include having young children, anxiety, or suffering from a sleep disorder.

Symptoms and Signs of Sleep Deprivation

The immediate symptoms of not sleeping enough can be tiredness, irritability, poor concentration, and napping during the day.

If you go a few days of not getting enough sleep or you have erratic sleep patterns, the signs of sleep deprivation can be more serious. Doctors say that over time, sleep deprivation can cause a lack of alertness, poor memory, increased anxiety, and poor coordination. (5)

The Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Let's look in more detail at the effects of sleep deprivation and what you can do to combat them.

Lack of Sleep Can Cause Weight Gain

Putting on extra weight is one of the physical effects of sleep deprivation.

One of the reasons why chronic sleep deficiency causes you to be overweight is that it affects your hormones. Studies report that the hunger hormone ghrelin increases when you are deprived of sleep. At the same time, lack of sleep inhibits leptin – the hormone that makes you feel full. This hormonal imbalance can lead to overeating and obesity. (6)

One cohort study involving over 1,000 adults found that short sleep is associated with an increased risk of weight gain. Sleeping 5 hours or less increased ghrelin and decreased leptin hormones which are linked to increased incidences of obesity. (7)

Sleep deprivation can affect your weight because it also affects glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity. This lack of sleep can cause fat accumulation and increase your risk of obesity complications. (8)

Studies about the negative effects of sleep loss say that, although sleep is a sedentary activity, enjoying plenty of sleep can protect you from being overweight. (8)

Getting adequate sleep every night is a simple lifestyle choice that promotes weight loss. Also learn how to boost your weight-loss efforts by increasing the amount you walk daily.

Long Term Sleep Deprivation May Lead to Cancer

Insufficient sleep can be one of the factors that can increase your risk of developing cancer.

The *Journal of Cancer* reports that chronic sleep deprivation is associated with incidences of cancer. For example, insomnia or sleep apnea can increase a person's risk of breast cancer, oral cancer, or prostate cancer. (9)

Some studies, however, have not found a definite link between the long-term effects of sleep deprivation and cancer. Interestingly, regularly sleeping longer than 8 hours a night could increase the risk of colorectal cancer. (10)

Regularly getting a good night's sleep boosts your immune system and helps your body fight disease. Find out what foods you should eat to help lower your risk of various types of cancer.

Lack of Sleep May Increase Risk of Death

Although there is no evidence that you can die directly from a lack of sleep, sleep deprivation can lead to early death.

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A report published in 2010 found that people who averaged 7 hours of sleep every night have the lowest mortality risk. Sleeping less than 7 hours or sleeping longer is associated with an increased risk of dying early. Researchers found that the effects of not getting enough sleep lead to serious health conditions that can shorten your life. (11)

Poor sleep causes cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, and stress. One or more of these conditions combined can decrease your life expectancy. (11)

Too Little Sleep Causes Chronic Inflammation

Because a loss of sleep doesn't allow your body time to repair itself and recharge itself, sleep exhaustion can cause chronic inflammation.

Inflammation in the short term is necessary to help your body fight disease. However, long-term inflammation can put you at risk of developing chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

For example, the book *StatPearls* reports that chronic inflammation is a side effect of chronic sleep disorders. Lack of sleep and stress (that often causes sleepless nights) cause the body to release inflammatory enzymes. One of the ways to combat chronic inflammation is to sleep between 7 and 8 hours every night. (12)

Research into the long-term effects of sleep deprivation has found that it has the potential to cause mild to moderate organ damage. Sleeping well every night can help to improve your gastrointestinal and cardiovascular health. (13)

Lack of Sleep Makes You Sick

One of the risks of sleep deprivation is that your body is more prone to infection and you will get sick more often.

The journal *Sleep* explains why not getting enough sleep makes you sick. When you experience chronic sleep deprivation, it alters cellular immune responses in the body and increases biomarkers of inflammation. (14)

The results of a 2017 study showed that contracting infectious diseases is one of the risks of sleep deprivation. The study found that persistent lack of sleep increased inflammatory cytokines that negatively impacted on the immune system. Adequate sleep has a powerful effect on a person's immunity. (15)

Making sure that you are not sleep-deprived is one way to boost your immunity. Learn about other life hacks to strengthen your body against infections.

Not Getting Enough Sleep Negatively Affects Your Brain Function

Lack of sleep directly affects your mental abilities and it has negative effects on your brain.

Most of us know that not getting enough sleep leaves us feeling tired, frustrated, forgetful, and having difficulty concentrating the next day. However, the long-term effects of little sleep can be even more worrying.

A lack of sleep over a long period of time can build up a sleep debt that impairs your cognitive ability. Research has found that sleep deprivation can result in memory loss and impair attention span. A chronic lack of sleep can also make it harder for you to solve problems and cope with complex tasks. (16)

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Research on animal subjects found that sleeping for 5 hours or less will significantly affect brain function. Even brief periods of sleep deprivation can negatively impact on memory function. When a person "catches up on lost sleep," brain function should be restored. (17)

If you want to keep your mind active and sharp, avoid trying to function on 5 hours of sleep. You can also try some of these "brain foods" that can help to improve your concentration levels and boost brain power.

Chronic Sleep Deprivation Can Lead to Depression and

Mood Changes

One of the psychological effects of sleep deprivation is depression.

Researchers have found that the dangers of a long-term lack of sleep are depression and mood disorders. Restricted sleep affects hormone levels in the brain that can lead to depressive thoughts and behavioral changes. Serotonin is released during REM sleep, and a lack of serotonin is often connected to depression. (18)

The negative effects on your brain of not sleeping are also highlighted when a person is deprived of sleep. The journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry* in 2018 reported that sleep deprivation can cause hallucinations and episodes of psychosis. Usually, getting enough sleep can help to stop delusions and hallucinations caused by a lack of sleep. (19)

Interestingly, some therapists use sleep deprivation techniques for treating depression. This can be used as a short-term remedy for depression under the guidance of a trained medical professional. (20)

This may explain why some people feel better with less sleep. However, as this article points out, there are many dangers associated with a chronic lack of sleep.

You can learn more about the [best natural serotonin supplements](#) for treating depression and anxiety.

If you suffer from a mood disorder, you can [find out more about natural remedies](#) for managing depression.

Loss of Sleep Can Lead to Type 2 Diabetes

If you are not sleeping enough, you put yourself at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The consequences of sleep deprivation can cause a number of metabolic conditions in the body that can cause diabetes. Studies have shown that little sleep affects nighttime glucose regulation. Also, sleep disorders can cause obesity which increases the diabetes risk. (23)

The study concluded that chronic sleep loss predisposes a person to diabetes. (23)

A review of studies on the effects of sleep on diabetes over a 10-year period found that sleeping less than 5 hours a night or longer than 9 hours a night increases the risk of becoming a diabetic. (24)

You can help lower your risk of diabetes by avoiding chronic sleep deficiency. You can also [add some of these foods to your diet](#) to help prevent symptoms of diabetes.

Sleep Deficiency May Cause Heart Disease

The physical effects of not sleeping 7 or 8 hours every night can negatively impact on your cardiovascular system.

A 2016 study found that many lifestyle factors are causing people to sleep less. This lack of sleep affects heart health. People who have short sleep or disrupted sleep patterns suffer more from heart disease. Also, building up a large sleep debt can increase mortality rates from cardiovascular problems. [\(25\)](#)

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One study found that regularly sleeping 4 hours or less can increase a man's risk of dying from heart disease by 2.8 times when compared to men who sleep for the recommended 7 hours a night. [\(26\)](#)

Similarly, women who slept less than 6 hours a night were more at risk from heart disease mortality than women who slept for 7 to 8 hours every night. [\(26\)](#)

It is important to get enough sleep regularly and avoid a sleep debt if you want to keep your heart healthy.

You can also boost your cardiovascular health by enjoying the cardiac diet. Find out about [more foods that are good for your heart](#).

Poor Sleep Quality May Increase Blood Pressure

If you don't get enough sleep every night, you put yourself at risk of hypertension and the effects of high blood pressure.

One study looked at the effects on blood pressure of not sleeping for 24 hours. Scientists noted that heart rate increased during nighttime hours when a person should be sleeping. The next morning, both blood pressure and heart rate were elevated. The study confirmed that the side effects of not enough sleep can be high blood pressure and increased risk of cardiovascular disease. [\(27\)](#)

Other studies confirm that the effects of sleep deprivation can lead to hypertension and cardiovascular events, especially in elderly persons. [\(28\)](#)

Learn about [other lifestyle changes to make](#) to help treat high blood pressure naturally.

Severe Sleep Deprivation Increases Your Risk of Stroke

The consequences of not sleeping enough can be very serious if you are already at risk of a stroke.

Of course, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and an irregular heartbeat are serious risk factors for stroke. However, the journal *Frontiers in Neurology* reported that getting enough sleep could be a way to prevent stroke if you have these risk factors. The researchers reported that a lack of sleep has a great impact on the chances of having a stroke. (29)

Learn how to spot the [first signs of a stroke](#) and what else you can do to reduce your risk of this potentially-fatal health condition.

Not Getting Enough Sleep Can Affect Hormone Levels

Disrupted sleep patterns, going to bed late and waking up early, or poor sleep quality can have impact on hormone production.

According to the *International Journal of Endocrinology*, your hormonal balance depends greatly on sleep quality. Your sleep (or lack of it) affects hormones such as [thyroid hormones](#), melatonin, [cortisol](#), growth hormones, and hunger hormones. (30)

Sleep deprivation increases your risk of hormone-related conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and [thyroid issues](#). (30)

Getting enough sleep is one way to help [address signs of a hormonal imbalance](#).

Lack of Sleep Kills Sex Drive

Not getting enough sleep doesn't just make you sick, but can put the brakes on your libido.

One study found that men who suffer from sleep disorders and don't get quality sleep have a lower sex drive. Poor sleep quality and loss of sleep affect testosterone levels and, therefore, affects sexual desire. (31)

A severe sleep deficiency can cause obesity which can also impact on testosterone hormone levels. This is another reason why not getting enough sleep can affect your sex life. (31)

Further reading: [The best aphrodisiac foods to eat to boost sexual desire](#).

Sleep Exhaustion Can Cause You to Make Fatal Mistakes

One of the most serious consequences of being chronically tired due to a lack of sleep is death.

Although it is virtually impossible to die from sleep deprivation, sleep exhaustion can cause mistakes that can have fatal consequences.

For example, driving while drowsy due to a loss of sleep can cause serious car accidents. In fact, some studies report that about 12% of all vehicle accidents are due to sleepiness. Scientists say that even a modest lack of sleep can impair judgment and reaction time. (32)

A 2015 report warns that medical professionals who suffer from sleep deprivation are more prone to making mistakes and put patient safety at risk. (33)

Interestingly, one study found that rats who were totally deprived of sleep eventually died of a lack of sleep after 11-32 days. (34)

Tips for Better Sleep

Making positive changes to improve your sleep quality will help avoid many of the risks associated with sleep deprivation. Getting a good night's sleep improves your health, boosts your brain function, and helps prevent chronic diseases.

What can you do to get enough sleep every night? Here are some simple tips that doctors recommend for healthy sleep: (3)

- Have a set bedtime and wake-up time every day, even on the weekends.
- Spend the hour before going to bed as a quiet time and avoid bright artificial lights (such as a TV or computer screen).
- Don't eat heavy meals or drink caffeinated or alcoholic drinks before going to bed.
- Try snacking on some of these [delicious foods that help you sleep better](#).
- Be physically active throughout the day, but avoid strenuous activity before going to bed.
- Try some relaxation techniques with [essential oils to help relax better](#).

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