

# Zero Weight Gain

HOLIDAY CHALLENGE



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## Sleep Deprivation: The Scary Truth

### Losing Sleep Makes You More Than Tired

Many of us suffer from sleep deprivation. It may only occur for a few days during a busy holiday season or it may become a chronic condition.

There is some evidence that too little sleep or too much sleep both contribute to overweight and obesity in adults and children. This may be related to hormone changes that control appetite, blood sugar levels, stress reactions and thyroid metabolism. It may also be that we just eat more when we stay up late or that we are so tired the next day that we don't have the energy to exercise or choose the healthiest food. Lack of sleep may also increase our risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, memory loss, impaired immunity, Type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.

#### Getting Back on Track:

Our fast-paced lives make it difficult to get enough restorative sleep and we are paying the price. Here are some tips on how you can get your sleep schedule back on track:

- **Reset your circadian rhythm.** Get some bright sunlight for at least five minutes when you first wake up each day. You will feel more alert and get your



**When you get more sleep, you have more energy to make good health decisions.**

sleep/wake cycle back to normal.

- **Reserve caffeine for morning only.** If caffeine affects you, limit your intake of coffee, tea or other stimulating beverages to one serving per day, preferably before lunch. Don't reach for more caffeine when you feel that afternoon slump. It will only make it harder for you to sleep later. If you consume coffee drinks with lots of added sugar and whipped cream, sweet tea, sugary soft drinks or energy drinks, you will also cut some extra calories you don't need.

- **Do some regular exercise.** Thirty minutes or more

## Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per day.

### Sleep ....

of physical activity a day has been shown to improve sleep quality. Just be sure to do it at least 2-3 hours before you want to go to sleep. Exercising too close to bed time can make it hard to settle down. Of course exercise is also a natural way to burn some calories and tone up your muscles.

- **Get up and go to bed at regular times.** If you wake up at about the same time every day, you will establish a more regular sleep pattern. This will then make you more likely to go to bed at a regular time as well.

- **Avoid that nightcap.** Some people think alcohol makes them relax and go to sleep more easily. However, alcohol actually disrupts your sleep and makes you more tired in the morning. Plus alcohol is another source of empty calories.

- **Don't eat a large meal too late.** Going to bed after a heavy meal can make sleep difficult. Some research shows that eating your largest meal earlier in the day instead of in the evening helps with weight control.



- **Limit screen time.** Light from a TV or from working on a computer may be the worst thing for getting restful sleep. Stop using all electronic devices at least 30 minutes to an hour before you go to bed. Instead take a relaxing bath, read a book, listen to soothing music, share a bedtime story with your child or do meditation to calm your mind and body down.

- **Be checked for sleep apnea.** People who carry excess weight often suffer from sleep disorders like sleep apnea. If you are tired all the time and have been told you snore, have your doctor schedule a sleep disorder test. If you are diagnosed with the problem, there are treatments that will help you sleep more restfully.

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