



> LIVING IN A “SUPER-SIZED” WORLD > WHAT DOES SLEEPLESSNESS COST YOU?

LIVING IN A “SUPER-SIZED” WORLD

According to The Journal of the American Dietetic Association, over 12.5 million children and adolescents are overweight. Additionally, household eating rules are strongly correlated with the intake of fruits, vegetables and fats among adolescents overall. Considering this, what would you do if you knew your son or daughter’s life was dependent upon your eating rules?

It is important in today’s society for young children to be taught and encouraged to take care of their bodies and make healthier food choices, as the choices children make in their early years will influence their future health. Research shows that 41% of obese children and 80% of obese teens become obese adults.¹

An additional concern regards a constellation of health problems called Metabolic Syndrome. In order to be classified as having Metabolic Syndrome, an individual must have at least three of the following conditions:

- » Type II Diabetes, insulin resistance or glucose intolerance.

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- » Hypertension
- » Altered lipid profile (low HDL, high LDL, and elevated triglycerides).
- » Visceral Obesity (apple shape body with midsection obesity).

Metabolic syndrome dramatically increases your risk of heart disease and diabetes. And, the more overweight you are, the greater the risk you have of developing it. Contributing factors are a mix of environment, lifestyle, genetics, nutrition, and diet influences. Studies show that 30% of moderately obese children suffered from Metabolic Syndrome, with a rate of 50% in children with severe obesity.²

Contrary to popular belief, being overweight is not inevitable if obesity “runs in the family.” Becoming overweight or obese is related to your genes, lifestyle, and environment, certainly, but this issue mainly comes about as a result of an imbalance between food consumption and physical activity.

Many societal factors play a part in the increase in obesity. For instance, our diet lifestyle has been altered by an increase in portion sizes, eating out more often, and the increased intake of sugar-sweetened drinks. Our physical activity has reduced due to the increased use of television, computers, and electronic games. As a result, it’s no wonder that national data shows an increase in calorie consumption and no change in physical activity.

Here are a few guidelines to help you and your family create a balanced lifestyle:

- » Build your mealtime as family time: Having meals together will help to focus the family on quality time spent and decrease the chance of emotional eating.
- » Balance your plate: Visualize your meal on a round plate and divide it into 3 sections. 1/2 should be vegetables, 1/4 lean protein, and 1/4 high fiber carbohydrates. Fat is very important, but use it sparingly like a condiment.

- » Ban highly processed foods.³
- » Buy raw fruits, vegetables and all natural foods (remember to wash all fruits and vegetables!).
- » Beware of the food choices available outside of the home, and reinforce limits.
- » Boost your energy through daily physical activity. Encourage your kids to join a team; it will not only help boost their self-esteem, but give them the ability to be physically active while building team skills.
- » Increase vitamin and mineral intake.

For more information about healthier eating and nutrition, talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian. S/he can give you the knowledge, support, and motivation to bring balance to your family’s lifestyle.

Sources:

1. Himes & Dietz, 1994
2. Weiss R, Dziura J, Burgert TS, et al. Obesity and the Metabolic Syndrome in Children and Adolescents.

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WHAT DOES SLEEPLESSNESS COST YOU?

According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), nearly 1 in 10 Americans have difficulty sleeping (i.e., falling asleep, staying asleep, or both). Additionally, sleeping less than six hours a night on a regular basis has been proven to decrease life expectancy. ***The cost:***

ARE WE GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

The 2002 Sleep in America poll, conducted by the National Sleep Foundation, showed that, in the 1900s, the average person slept 9 hours a night. By 1975, the total had fallen to 7.5 hours, and the average adult now only sleeps 6.9 hours a night. Most adults need anywhere from 7-9 hours of sleep a night to function properly.





WHY DO WE NEED SLEEP?

Sleep allows us to function in our everyday lives. It's needed to regenerate certain parts of the body, especially the brain. If you have ever been sleep-deprived, you know how this works. A sleepy person's brain has to work harder – and it accomplishes less.

WHAT CAUSES SLEEPLESSNESS?

Emotional stress or excitement can interfere with sleeping patterns, as can medical conditions and medication. Sleeplessness is often a direct result of lifestyle choices. Drinking caffeine and alcohol before bedtime or working unusual shifts can cause sleep deprivation.

HOW DOES LACK OF SLEEP AFFECT JOB PERFORMANCE?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, sleep deprivation and its effect on work performance may be costing U.S. employers some \$18 billion each year in lost productivity.

HOW DOES LACK OF SLEEP AFFECT SAFETY?

A fatigued person is accident-prone, judgment-impaired, and more likely to make bad decisions. This is why sleep deprivation contributes to road accidents and work injuries.



CHECK IT OUT

Check out the links below for more information on sleep deprivation, its effects, and where to seek help:

- » www.sleepfoundation.org
- » www.emedicine.com/neuro/topic444.htm
- » www.well.com/user/mick/insomnia

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HOW DOES IT AFFECT PHYSICAL HEALTH?

Sleep deprivation weakens the immune system, leaving us more susceptible to other diseases and illness. It is not uncommon for people who suffer from sleep deprivation to also suffer from other problems such as diabetes, asthma, or a second sleep disorder. We have all experienced at least one night of bad rest or sleeplessness. It's the continuous cycle of days, weeks, and months without a good night's rest that poses a problem to our lives and results in negative effects on our physical and mental health and personal safety.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF FATIGUE



» Results from a study released in the February 2006 issue of Sleep show that insomniacs miss an average of 5.8 days of work per year, while good sleepers miss only 2.4 days.



» The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that fatigue is a factor in at least 100,000 auto crashes and 1,500 deaths each year. If you fall asleep at the wheel, you endanger not only your own life, but the lives of everyone else on the road.



» Four percent of people who have had an accident or near accident admitted they were too tired, or actually dozed off while driving (2005 Sleep in America).

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