

## Sleep and obesity

Several scientific studies have shown that chronic sleep deficit of even 1- 2 hours a day, can cause weight gain of up to 10-15 kg, high blood sugar and high-fat levels in the blood. The medical science has robust data to support that lack of sleep and obesity are interacting epidemics. Protecting sleep time and sleep hours are a challenge in a modern world dominated by artificial light and digital technology. The long work hours, nighttime social life with extended eating hours, have cut into normal sleeping time. It takes great resolve and effort in modern times, to protect sleep hours and sleep quality.

### Rules of rejuvenating sleep

- \* Eat 2-3 hours before bedtime. Good sleep is not possible on a full stomach.
- \* Keep daily sleep cycle consistent as much as possible. Plan on 7 – 8 hours of sleep daily, by getting into the bed before 11 PM. Sleeping late after midnight cuts away from rejuvenating deep sleep and dream sleep (also called rapid eye movement or REM sleep cycle). These two sleep cycles are essential to the consolidation of memory and enhance creativity.
- \* Go to bed with a calm and joyful state of mind. No conflicts or arguments before bedtime. That requires a spiritual dimension of being in a state of soul consciousness honoring virtues like love, truth, peace, and purity and overcoming vices like anger, hostility, jealousy and ill will.
- \* Avoid vigorous aerobic exercises after 6 PM, as these release excitatory hormones such as adrenalin. It takes the body a long time to cool down after an aerobic exercise routine to be able to initiate a rejuvenating deep sleep.
- \* Do not expose eyes to blue light emission from television, computer and cell phone screens for at least 1-2 hours before sleep time. These tempting and distracting devices have no place in a peaceful and healthy bedroom. The ambiance of the bedroom should be quiet, peaceful and dark.
- \* Melatonin is the sleep hormone in the body. It is secreted in the brain in the morning hours when the eyes get exposed to sunlight or natural morning light. Late risers do not get the benefit of natural morning light and may have difficulty getting rejuvenating deep sleep from low levels of melatonin. Lack of sleep following a time zone travel (Jetlag) is because of the lack of melatonin. Insomnia following jetlag, therefore, gets better with melatonin pills.
- \* Heart and blood pressure medications such as beta blockers like Atenolol, decrease melatonin secretion and can cause severe insomnia. Melatonin pills are a safer, more logical option for sleep in these individuals than tranquilizers and sedative sleeping pills
- \* Wear loose, comfortable, light-colored clothing in bed. Keep bed linen light or white.

\* Avoid taking sleep medications on a regular basis. The truth is that there is no sleep medication available in the world, which can produce natural rejuvenating sleep. Most of the sleep drugs are addictive and cause a headache, irritability, and hangover the next morning.