



Nutrition and Sleep

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Diet and Sleep

Is there a connection between your diet and Your Sleep?

Yes! Very definitely. In fact, more so than you would think. Your mind and your body...It's all connected. That's why they call alternative or non-traditional medicine "holistic" or "functional" medicine. Everything functions together. Even though allopathic or traditional medicine features "specialists", your heart can't function without your brain and your pulmonary system; your brain can't function on its own either. It's all connected!

What happens if you don't get enough sleep or enough good quality sleep? The effects are striking and serious. In fact, without good sleep, you're more like to struggle with weight gain and obesity, develop diabetes and even cardiovascular disease.

Nutrition and sleep are important in managing and preventing depression something with which I was very familiar for many decades. In fact, chronic depression was a torment for me until I changed how I eat and "disappeared" my depression. Did you know a hallmark of depression is interrupted sleep? Sleeping for a few hours and then being awake for hours in the dark is a classic, common symptom of depression

There are other risks associated with not sleeping well or enough and also with sleeping too much. Poor sleep habits lead to overeating and poor eating habits can interfere with your ability to get a good night's sleep...can you see how it's all connected?? There is a definite connection between the inability to sleep and what you eat and depression. Some of them include:

- Food choices can interrupt your sleep
- Inadequate sleep can exacerbate or bring on depression
- Depression can drive you to make unfortunate food choices to try to feel better even for a short time and these food choices can lead to poor sleep...can you see how totally connected it all is?
- By the same token, inadequate sleep leading to a day filled with fatigue can lead to poor food choices such as too much caffeine, simple carbs and sugar to try to power through the day which will again lead to a disappointing night of inadequate sleep

We all know exercise is essential to be and feel healthy and energetic. There is a connection between exercise, depression, diet/nutrition and sleep. If you're tired, you're less likely to go for that walk or to the gym, less likely to choose foods that will support your good nutrition during the day, and because it's all connected, less likely to get a good night's sleep at the end of your tired, lethargic, caffeine-and-sugar –laden-to-get-through-the-day day!

Why does diet matter when it comes to how well you sleep?

Diet matters when it comes to how well you sleep because just as diet and food patterns can influence depression, so they can influence the amount and quality of your sleep.

Avoiding eating, skipping meals and going for sweets are patterns that can contribute to a poor night's sleep and frankly to depression. Conversely, the right type of carbohydrate triggers the production of the brain chemicals tryptophan and serotonin. These chemicals give us a sense of well-being and help ward off depression and promote a good night's sleep!

So, how much sleep do most people need? Most people need 6-9 hours of quality sleep each night, and there are different lengths of sleepers each having different typical food patterns to their diet. The different types/lengths of sleepers and their food patterns are:

- Short sleepers. They eat more calories
- Normal sleepers are second in calorie consumption
- Very short sleepers are next
- Long sleepers consume the fewest calories
- Normal sleepers have more variety in their diets (a marker for better health as it assumes more nutrients are consumed from multiple sources)
- Very short sleepers have the least variety in their diets

Other characteristics of the different sleepers' diets include the following:

- Very short sleepers drank less water and ate fewer total carbohydrates and lycopene found in orange fruits and vegetables like orange peppers, for instance. By the way, lycopene is high in antioxidants to help ward off cancer
- Short sleepers consume less vitamin C, water and selenium (found in nuts, shellfish and meat and important for preventing cancer) and ate more green leafy veggies, so their diets were higher in lutein and zeaxanthin

- Long sleepers drank more alcohol and consumed fewer total carbohydrates. They also consumed less theobromine (found in chocolate and tea) and dodecanoic acid which is a saturated fat, and choline found in fatty meats and eggs

Not getting adequate sleep interferes with the hunger hormones critical to regulating appetite...ghrelin and leptin are supposed to let you know when you're hungry and it's time to eat (ghrelin) and then when you're full and it's time to stop eating (that's leptin's job).

Overweight/obese people have a higher occurrence of sleep apnea which has been linked to a higher risk of stroke and heart disease. Sleep apnea occurs when breathing is interrupted or stops during the sleep cycle. Sleep apnea is serious and studies show even a 10% drop in weight can help sleep apnea!

What if you took steps to improve your diet?

If you took steps to improve your diet, many things would improve. First of all, making better food choices would help you lose weight. Excess weight and obesity are connected with poor sleep. Which affects which you may wonder...just remember that it's all connected.

Eating evenly spaced meals during the day with balanced nutrition will help your sleep improve greatly

Determine if you're lactose or gluten intolerant which will cause gastrointestinal issues. Eating foods that negatively affect your digestion will have a negative impact on your sleep

If spicy foods upset you or give you heartburn, avoid them...especially for your evening meal.

Many people try to eat more healthfully by avoiding carbohydrates. Carbs are not the bad guys here. It's *the type* of carbohydrate that matters. If you're eating simple, highly processed carbs, that is not good...not good for the quality of your sleep or for your health in general.

Focus on including complex carbs in your diet such as brown, black or wild rice and quinoa. These are whole grains that are processed by your body slowly. It's helpful to understand how a little carbohydrate and protein can help sleep – the carbs trigger insulin production which assists sleep inducing tryptophan in entering the brain. Tryptophan is necessary for the

creation of the neurotransmitter serotonin in order to create a deeper sleep, also known as the REM cycle.

How do you improve your diet to improve the quality of your sleep? Let's talk turkey...

Speaking of turkey, is the whole eating turkey and feeling tired a myth, or is there something to it?

The B vitamins in poultry help your body process tryptophan faster and turn it into sleep promoting serotonin, so there is some science behind the myth! Good to know. There is also the fact that after a big Thanksgiving meal, your body is busy digesting all that food which leaves you feeling more lethargic than if you had eaten a light meal of salad and a small serving of protein.

Here are some other suggestions to help you enjoy a better night's sleep:

- Vitamin B3, known as niacin, can aid in sleeping more soundly by extending your REM cycle, also know as you deep sleep cycle. B3 is found in beets, mushrooms, poultry, peas, sunflower seeds and avocado.
- Drink less water in the evening before bed so you don't have to interrupt your sleep to get up and use the bathroom or worse yet, lie there for hours thinking you should really get up and use the bathroom...as me how I know...
- Don't use the ability of being able to function as a badge of honor
 - We all know someone who brags about how little sleep they get
 - It will catch up with them...
- Eat balanced nutritious meals over the course of the day. Eating too much late at night can interfere with a good night's sleep as your digestive system is hard at work! Eating late at night leaves you open to indigestion instead of a restful night's sleep.
- The right mix of calories and nutrients can promote better sleep which in turn increases your chances of avoiding obesity and heart disease
 - Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in refined foods filled with simple carbohydrates, sugar and trans fats will reduce your empty calorie intake, provide you with more vitamins and nutrients from your food and help you release weight without dieting.
 - Dark leafy green vegetables are under consumed in our Standard American Diet (SAD). Make the salad the main dish! By the way, I often have salad for breakfast; try it...it's a wonderful way to being a productive energetic day!

- Go to bed and get up at the same time each night. For instance, to bed at 10 am and up at 6 am. Your body loves consistency; it relieves stress and allows it to function in a familiar way on a familiar schedule which is less stressful.
- Have a warm cup of something without caffeine – herbal tea like chamomile, warm milk or almond milk – it’s soothing in many ways. There are wonderful blends of sleep promoting herbal teas available that are a wonderful way to wrap up a busy day! I love thyme tea with a little coconut milk and xylitol in it. Very soothing!
- Avoid alcohol. It’s a depressant, and while it may help you relax and get to sleep, it’s likely it will interrupt your sleep pattern later in the night
- Avoid eating chocolate in the evening. The caffeine will affect your sleep the same way a cup of coffee will.
- Avoid eating sugar. It will “amp you up” just as you should be powering down for a restful night’s sleep.
- Don’t eat a heavy meal late at night. Your digestive system will be at work making a good night’s sleep more elusive
- If you’re hungry before bed, the best snack to have is a light snack of complex carbohydrate and a little bit of protein like a few slices of apple and some almond butter or hummus. Special benefit: The pectin in the apple will also help you feel full.
- If you have an upset stomach before bedtime, try the thyme tea I mentioned earlier or peppermint tea. Research done about 10 years ago at Tufts University determined peppermint tea to be a digestive aid and I’ve personally found thyme tea to be very soothing to the tummy!
- Supplements can assist with an improved night’s sleep – magnesium can help with restless leg syndrome which can be brought on by the side effects of some medications. Foods such as dark leafy green vegetables, beans, fish nuts and seeds are high in magnesium.
- EFT/tapping to sleep and for stress reduction
 - Brad Yeats
 - Cheryl Richardson
 - Carol Look
 - Nick Ortner
- Put a meditation app on your phone and listen as you’re falling asleep
- Herbal products –
 - Melatonin
 - Blended products of valerian root and other herbs

It's clear that diet and sleep are intertwined. Just as you can change your health and how you feel both mentally and physically by changing how you eat, so can you positively affect the quality of your sleep by making good food and drink choices to support a good night's rest! Just remember:

It's all connected...

Helping You Achieve Major Wellness!

Cheryl

Cheryl A Major, CNWC

About Cheryl A Major, CNWC

Cheryl has been on a healthy eating journey for many years. Beginning at age 28 when she discovered she was severely hypoglycemic, she has adjusted and changed her diet and the eating habits of those around her.

This journey led her to remove all processed foods, gluten and preservatives from her diet. The change in how she felt both physically and mentally has been the inspiration for her flagship blog <http://ThinStrongHealthy.com>. An unexpected result of these changes was a significant drop in weight... and then she knew she was really on to something others needed to know!

Imagine! Americans changing the way they eat and losing weight without trying and without subjecting themselves to “diets” and the resulting yo-yo weight- lose then gain, lose then gain again that we see happen all the time. Americans changing the way they eat and losing the chronic depression that plaques so many in our society.

Cheryl’s mission is to share her discoveries with as many people as possible. What she has discovered can change the lives of others as it has changed her life, both mentally and physically.

Cheryl says, “I’ve read books by people who have studied depression, but you can tell they don’t *feel it*.” She says, “I didn’t learn this... I live it!”

*Cheryl A Major lives in West Suburban Boston and is a Certified Nutrition and Wellness Consultant. Her TV show **Thin Strong Healthy** airs on WestfordCat and is an offshoot of her blog <http://ThinStrongHealthy.com>. Cheryl offers ongoing information and personal health coaching to help you feel better and be healthier. She works with people of all ages and challenges to help them understand how and what to eat to get healthier quickly and deliciously. Download your [10 Tips for Healthy Eating on a Budget](#), **and get started right away!***

2018 Resources

[Vitamins and Foods for Hormone Reset](#)

[Example Food Journal](#)

[Food Journal](#)

[Different Names of Sugar \(from the Documentary “Fed Up”\)](#)

[Clean Fifteen and the Dirty Dozen \(EWG.org\)](#)

Books:

[The Blood Sugar Solution](#) – by Dr. Mark Hyman

[Sugar Blues](#) – by William Dufty

[Grain Brain](#) – by Dr. David Perlmutter

[Wheat Belly](#) – by William Davis MD

[The Disease Delusion](#) – by Dr. Jeffrey Bland

[In Defense of Food](#) – by Michael Pollan

[The 30 Day Heart Tune-Up](#) – by Steven Masley MD

[Salt Sugar Fat](#) – by Michael Moss

[Fat Chance](#) – Robert H. Lustig, M.D.

[The Tapping Solution](#) – Nick Ortner

DVDs:

[Fed Up](#)

[That Sugar Film](#)

[Food Matters](#)

CDs:

[Eat for Health – Dr. Joel Fuhrman](#)

Charts, Graphs and Other Info:

[The 56 Names of Sugar](#) (courtesy of the movie FED UP)

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