

## 10 Reasons Why Good Sleep Is Important

Written by [Joe Leech, MS](#) on February 24, 2020 — Medically reviewed by [Atli Arnarson BSc, PhD](#)

A good night's sleep is incredibly important for your health.

In fact, it's just as important as eating healthy and exercising.

Unfortunately, there's a lot that can interfere with natural sleep patterns.

People are now sleeping less than they did in the past, and sleep quality has decreased as well.

Here are 10 reasons why good sleep is important.

### 1. Poor sleep is linked to higher body weight

Poor sleep is strongly linked to weight gain.

People with short sleep duration tend to weigh significantly more than those who get adequate sleep.

In fact, short sleep duration is one of the strongest risk factors for obesity.

In one extensive review study, children and adults with short sleep duration were 89% and 55% more likely to develop obesity, respectively

The effect of sleep on weight gain is believed to be mediated by [numerous factors](#), including hormones and motivation to exercise.

If you're trying to lose weight, getting quality sleep is absolutely crucial.

### SUMMARY

Short sleep duration is associated with an increased risk of weight gain and obesity in both children and adults.

## **6. Sleep affects glucose metabolism and type 2 diabetes risk**

Experimental sleep restriction affects blood sugar and reduces insulin sensitivity.

In a study in healthy young men, restricting sleep to 4 hours per night for 6 nights in a row caused symptoms of [prediabetes](#).

These symptoms resolved after one week of increased sleep duration.

Poor sleep habits are also strongly linked to adverse effects on blood sugar in the general population.

Those sleeping less than 6 hours per night have repeatedly been shown to be at an increased risk of type 2 diabetes.

### **SUMMARY**

Sleep deprivation can cause prediabetes in healthy adults in as little as 6 days. Many studies show a strong link between short sleep duration and type 2 diabetes.

## **7. Poor sleep is linked to depression**

Mental health issues, such as [depression](#), are strongly linked to poor sleep quality and sleeping disorders.

It's been estimated that 90% of people with depression complain about sleep quality.

Poor sleep is even associated with an increased risk of death by suicide.

Those with [sleeping disorders](#) like insomnia or obstructive sleep apnea also report significantly higher rates of depression than those without.

### **SUMMARY**

Poor sleeping patterns are strongly linked to depression, particularly for those with a sleeping disorder.

## **8. Sleep improves your immune function**

Even a small loss of sleep has been shown to impair immune function.

One large 2-week study monitored the development of the common cold after giving people nasal drops with the cold virus.

They found that those who slept less than 7 hours were almost 3 times more likely to develop a cold than those who slept 8 hours or more.

If you often get colds, ensuring that you get at least 8 hours of sleep per night could be very helpful. Eating [more garlic](#) can help as well.

### **SUMMARY**

Getting at least 8 hours of sleep can improve your immune function and help fight the common cold.

## **9. Poor sleep is linked to increased inflammation**

Sleep can have a major effect on [inflammation](#) in your body.

In fact, sleep loss is known to activate undesirable markers of inflammation and cell damage.

Poor sleep has been strongly linked to long-term inflammation of the digestive tract, in disorders known as [inflammatory bowel disease](#).

One study observed that sleep-deprived people with Crohn's disease were twice as likely to relapse as patients who slept well.

Researchers are even recommending sleep evaluation to help predict outcomes in individuals with long-term inflammatory issues.

### **SUMMARY**

Sleep affects your body's inflammatory responses. Poor sleep is linked to inflammatory bowel diseases and can increase your risk of disease recurrence.

## **10. Sleep affects emotions and social interactions**

Sleep loss reduces your ability to interact socially.

Several studies confirmed this using emotional facial recognition tests.

One study found that people who hadn't slept had a reduced ability to recognize expressions of anger and happiness.

Researchers believe that poor sleep affects your ability to recognize important social cues and process emotional information.

## **SUMMARY**

Sleep deprivation may reduce your social skills and ability to recognize people's emotional expressions.

## **The bottom line**

Along with nutrition and exercise, good sleep is one of the pillars of health.

You simply cannot achieve optimal health without [taking care of your sleep](#).