



# LINKING SLEEP & WEIGHT LOSS

- Falling asleep should take 10 to 15 minutes. If you're out within five minutes of your head hitting the pillow, you're probably sleep-deprived.
- Just because you can't remember your dreams doesn't mean you're not having them. The average person has four to six dreams each night but doesn't recall 99% of them.
- Sleep might just make you happier. Research shows that sleeping an extra 60 to 90 minutes per night would make most Americans happier, safer and healthier.
- Humans are the only mammal that willingly delays sleep. Guess that's one thing that separates us from the animals.

## Sleep & Metabolism

- *Poor Sleep Is a Major Risk Factor for Weight Gain and Obesity.* Poor sleep has repeatedly been linked to a higher body mass index (BMI) and weight gain. People's sleep requirements vary, but, generally speaking, research has observed changes in weight when people get fewer than seven hours of sleep a night.
- *Poor Sleep Can Increase Your Appetite.* Many studies have found that people who are sleep-deprived report having an increased appetite. This is likely caused by the impact of sleep on two important hunger hormones, ghrelin and leptin. Ghrelin is a hormone released in the stomach that signals hunger in the brain. Levels are high before you eat, which is when the stomach is empty, and low after you eat. Leptin is a hormone released from fat cells. It suppresses hunger and signals fullness in the brain. When you do not get adequate sleep, the body makes more ghrelin and less leptin, leaving you hungry and increasing your appetite.
- *Poor Sleep Can Increase Your Calorie Intake.* A study of 12 men found that when participants were allowed only four hours of sleep, they ate an average of 559 more calories the following day, compared to when they were allowed eight hours. This increase in calories may be due to increased appetite and poor food choices.

## Sleep Tips

- Create a bedtime ritual. It's not the time to tackle big issues. Instead, take a warm bath, meditate, or read.
- Stick to a schedule, waking up and retiring at the same times every day, even on weekends.
- Watch what and when you eat. Avoid eating heavy meals and alcohol close to bedtime, which may cause heartburn and make it hard to fall asleep. And steer clear of soda, tea, coffee, and chocolate after 2 p.m. Caffeine can stay in your system for 5 to 6 hours.
- Turn out the lights. Darkness cues your body to release the natural sleep hormone melatonin, while light suppresses it.
- Shut down your computer, cell phone, and TV at least an hour before you hit the sack.

