

HEALTH / NATIONAL

How a Lack of Sleep Can Widen Your Waistline

People who choose to skip sleep to study, work or play late into the night may find they’ve extended not just their waking hours but also their tummies.

Less sleep means more eating

A small new study found that the basic problem sources back to the fact that people who don’t get enough sleep tend to eat more. Even worse, all those extra calories wind up precisely where most people don’t want it: around the belly.

“Our work focused on people who chose to sleep less,” explains study author Dr. Virend Somers, a professor of cardiovascular medicine with the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Rochester, Minn. “It wasn’t about insomnia, so much as, say, a student in college who decides they find it necessary to sleep less for a while in order to get their work done.

“But what we found is that when a relatively young, healthy and lean person is sleep-deprived and has unrestricted access to food, he or she eats 300 more calories per day,” Somers adds.

That extra food did not appear to lead to enormous weight gains, the researchers acknowledge. Yet, it did appear to translate into a “stunning” 11% increase in so-called “visceral fat,” Somers shares.

“That’s the fat that wraps around the belly and the internal organs,” he notes. “The fat which you really can’t see. But it’s actually the most dangerous fat.”

That is because deeply deposited visceral fat “produces all kinds of toxic

things that cause heart and blood vessel disease,” including high blood pressure, high blood sugar and high cholesterol — all of which can notably elevate the risk for developing diabetes.

How less sleep widens your waistline

Somers and his colleagues reported their findings in the April 5 issue of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

They note that more than a third of American adults regularly fail to get enough sleep due to lifestyle choices, such as working night shifts or falling prey to the lure of social media.

To explore the impact of sleep loss on fat accumulation, investigators enlisted 12 healthy people aged 19 to 39 between 2013 and 2018.

None of the participants was obese. All were asked to complete two in-laboratory study phases, each lasting three weeks in total.

In one phase, two weeks involved significant daily sleep restriction, meaning nighttime sleep of just four hours. The other phase involved no sleep restriction.

Throughout each phase, “we monitored all the food they had,” Somers shares. “But they could eat or order anything they wanted.”

The team found that protein intake rose by 13% and fat intake went up by 17% during the sleep restriction phase, while activity levels remained more or less constant.

Still, “the interesting thing is that when sleep restriction occurred, they only gained about a pound in weight over the study time frame, which is not a large increase,” Somers shares.

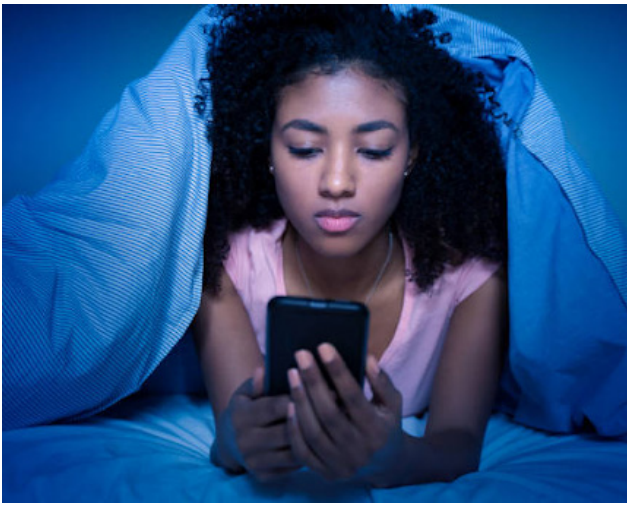
“But what really surprised us,” he adds, “is that even after sleep restriction was stopped and eating levels fell back [down], visceral fat continued to increase.

“We don’t know why this happened. We also don’t know what this might mean for people who are already obese. Or for people who struggle with insomnia that they can’t control. That will be for future research,” Somers shares.

How to weight gain

“But what we can tell already is that even for healthy people who lose sleep by choice, this is not a switch you can readily turn off once you turn it on,” he says. “And what’s really important to understand here is that catch-up sleep — after sleep loss — will not necessarily bring you back to normal.”

Somers’ advice: “If you are going to be sleep-deprived for a prolonged period you should pay particular attention to how much food you eat and what your food choices are. And be more conscientious about exercising.”



Also, since visceral fat rises even if the scale barely budes, “know that measuring your weight alone is not going to tell you if things are good or bad,” he says.

The thought was seconded by Dr. Harold Bays, medical director and president of the Louisville Metabolic and Atherosclerosis Research Center, and author of an accompanying editorial.

“Abnormal sleep patterns — especially when due to stress — are likely to worsen body fat function, increase visceral or belly fat, and worsen body composition, even without much change in body weight,” Bays adds. But the solution, he suggests, is simple: Get enough sleep. (Source: BlackDoctor.org by Jessica Daniels)

These strategies and life hacks can help anyone with ADHD, as well as those who struggle with attention problems but don’t have a diagnosis

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Imagine that it’s 4:59 p.m., only one minute before your deadline. You swore you’d never put yourself in this position again, and yet you have. This isn’t your best work, and you’ll be lucky just to turn anything in. What would you do differently if you could turn back the clock?

Living with ADHD can feel like this on a daily basis, but it doesn’t have to.

For millions of adults throughout the world, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, best known as ADHD, is a persistent disorder that begins in childhood and is characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, or a combination thereof. Complicating the diagnosis is that ADHD often co-occurs with, and is sometimes mistaken for, other health conditions like anxiety or substance abuse.

Because of the steady stream of negative feedback people with ADHD receive about their productivity, organizational skills and time management, some people with the disorder may have low self-esteem or feel inadequate. But rather than an intrinsic personal defect, ADHD is a treatable condition. Research shows that behavioral strategies, along with medication when necessary, can help people improve their focus and ease of functioning in daily life.

As a psychologist and an assistant clinical professor at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, I lead an adult therapy group that focuses on skills to manage ADHD. From that work, I’ve compiled numerous strategies to help anyone who has trouble harnessing their attention, whether or not they’ve received a formal ADHD diagnosis.

ADHD can be treated and managed through various options including medication, therapy and time-management techniques.

Organizational systems and prioritizing

A simple organizational system can improve focus by providing a way to keep track of important activities. Ideally the system is centered on one tool, such as a notebook or phone app, assuming the phone is not too distracting. Developing a routine that includes a daily schedule, a regularly updated to-do list and a calendar to remind yourself of appointments can provide a foundation for building focus and a sense of control.

With the to-do list, it’s crucial to break tasks down into manageable parts and then prioritize them. Knowing what to prioritize can be difficult, but one helpful approach is the Eisenhower matrix, which divides tasks into four quadrants: urgent and important, like a work project that’s due tomorrow; urgent and unimportant, such as a request that someone else can fulfill; nonurgent but important, like long-term projects; and nonurgent and unimportant, meaning something that doesn’t need to be done.

Many with ADHD are motivated to first fulfill urgent and unimportant tasks such as responding to the requests of others, because someone else’s sense of urgency seems more important than their own needs. Also, doing something for someone else can lead to quick positive feedback and provide a welcome break from what may be a stressful task. The Eisenhower matrix prioritizes what’s most important instead of what’s most immediately gratifying.

Managing the environment and limiting distractions

Several strategies can help you stay on track. It’s key to create an environment that’s conducive to productivity. That means limiting distractions and setting up barriers to temptation. Use social media web blockers while working, and ideally put your phone and computer in airplane mode. Set up environmental cues, like

alarms and visual reminders, to monitor time and make sure you’re sticking with your targeted priority.

Waiting to focus on a task until just before the deadline not only causes last-minute stress, but it also has a domino effect on other priorities and basic life necessities, like eating and sleeping. This can be remedied with the “distractibility delay,” a method of staying on task that’s especially useful for tasks you want to avoid. The first step is to designate a time period for which you can stay focused. For example, focus on work for 25 minutes, then take a five-minute break before repeating the cycle.

Set a timer and have your notebook nearby. When you begin doing the challenging task, you may discover that other unrelated activities suddenly seem urgent. Instead of acting on them, jot down those tasks in your notebook, remind yourself you can do them later and return to the work at hand. At the end of the focused period, look at what you jotted down and decide if any of those tasks actually require immediate action. If so, you can do them during your break or add them to your to-do list.

Support networks

A support system is critical to staying on task, both to hold yourself accountable and to get encouragement. Your support network could include friends and family, a therapist, group therapy, or an online forum to share goals and receive feedback.

Another effective support strategy is body doubling. This means working, either physically or virtually, alongside someone you know who is also working. This creates mutual accountability for staying on task..



Chavapong Prateep Na Thalangi/Stock via Getty Images Plus

The need for sleep

People with ADHD often have trouble going to bed at a designated time – and then have trouble falling asleep. And a large body of evidence indicates that irregular sleep can perpetuate a cycle of attention difficulties.

Sticking to a bedtime schedule and getting up at the same time every day is part of a good sleep hygiene strategy. So is avoiding tobacco, caffeine, large meals and alcohol within a couple of hours of sleep. Also try not to nap within eight hours of your regular bedtime.

Develop ways to calmly unwind before bed. It is normal to take time to fall asleep, but if you’re unable to sleep after 45 minutes, get out of bed and do a relaxing activity until you’re sleepy again. It is not helpful to watch the clock.

As you incorporate these strategies, start with those that are most accessible to you. Though people with ADHD often chase novelty and chafe at routine, developing a routine is worth it. You might find that instead of racing to finish at the last minute, you have time to spare and are proud of what you’ve done.

Married Couple, HBCU Grads Celebrate One Year of Supporting Black and Women Entrepreneurs in the Food Retail Industry



The mission to uplift minority-owned businesses continues into 2022.

Nationwide — Allen and Subriana Pierce, the founders of the Navigator Lighthouse Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Orange County, California that supports minority and women entrepreneurs in the food retail industry, are celebrating the one year anniversary of their foundation. Both are HBCU graduates. Al-

len graduated from North Carolina Central, and Subriana graduated from Spelman.

In the past year, their foundation has welcomed over two dozen minority and women-owned brands into their first cohort of members. Over 18 organizations were there to support and engage with the foundation’s educational opportunities by co-hosting a series of webinars alongside the Subriana and Allen. As

2022 begins, NielsenIQ, D4DT, Meeschell, One Venture Group, and ECRM are continuing their involvement as partners of the Navigator Lighthouse Foundation. The entrepreneurs also heard from retailers such as Shoprite, Costco, and Albertsons.

To celebrate its first anniversary, the Navigator Lighthouse Foundation hosted a Pitch Contest to give its members a plat-

form in front of a panel of leading retailers and investors in the grocery retail industry. Ten brands in the first cohort of the foundation pitched their brands to leaders from Gelson’s Supermarkets, Founders First Capital, Jewel-Osco, KeHE Distributors, IFundWomen, and Strong Connexion.

Rebecca Sytn, the Founder and Managing Partner of Blind Tiger; Max Doggett, the President of Safari Meats; and Pennie Crocket, the Founder and CEO of Pennies Teas, took home the first, second, and third-place prizes in the Pitch Contest, with Blind Tiger also winning the favor of the audience with the Audience Choice Award. Nearly \$10,000 was awarded to the three winners in addition to opportunities with several key retailers and investors on the judge’s panel.

Maxx Doggett, the President of Safari Meats, reflected on his time as a member, “The information and resources I’ve accumulated through the foundation’s training sessions are priceless. For the entrepreneur that wants to see their business go to the next level, the Navigator Lighthouse Foundation will help you build a strong base for

your company.”

Members of the Navigator Lighthouse Foundation gain access to exclusive opportunities with leading retailers, distributors, and support organizations. Tracey Richardson, the CEO and Co- Founder of Lillies of Charleston, says, “We were provided access to close to 100 retail buyers which couldn’t be achieved through our own efforts.”

Founding Board member, Allen Pierce says “We are so proud of many of these brands. They are going on to distribution at Walmart, Sam’s Club, Giant, Gelson’s, and other retailers. For our training curriculum to have played a part in any of this success is what motivates us to do more.”

The hard work continues in 2022 as the Navigator Lighthouse Foundation opens applications for their next cohort of members. If you have ever felt unheard or unseen by the food industry, the Navigator Lighthouse can help illuminate a tailored pathway for your unique brand. Apply now at navigatorlighthousefoundation.org/apply-now