

HOW DOES SLEEP IMPACT OUR WEIGHT ?

When we think of healthy behaviors eating a nutrient dense foods and exercising are quickly brought to mind , but sleep is one of the pillars we tend to forget of as a healthy lifestyle choice. Why is sleep so important? Sleep sets the stage for our days. When we sleep soundly for seven to eight hours, we awaken energized & ready for the day. Diet, exercise, and sleep work synergistically, and affect one another. All three can influence our daily well-being and longevity.

Adequate sleep must be prioritized to be well & vital. This helps prevent certain diseases, like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, and many other conditions. We can improve our food choices and engage in mindful eating by listening to our true appetite once our sleep is managed properly & maintained.

Sleep impacts our eating patterns, and our eating patterns impact our sleep!

At IHC of Charlottesville we recommend that adults should get about 8 hours of sleep each night. Unfortunately, only 1 in 3 adults meet this healthy lifestyle goal. At the same time people are struggling with sleep, they are also struggling with their weight and with making healthful food choices. One research study demonstrated that subjects who slept only four hours of sleep ate more food per day, compared to those who got at least 8 hours of rest.

More importantly, sleep-deprived individuals change the hormones that affect appetite and fullness negatively. One hormone called Ghrelin increases our appetite, and leptin plays an important role in helping us feel full. When we don't get enough sleep, ghrelin increases and leptin decreases!! Researchers looked at 495 women's sleep patterns, their daily quantity of food, and quality of food. They found that poor sleep quality was correlated with greater intake of food and lower diet quality. This means they made poor food choices more often and their weight increased!

What should we eat to get a good night's sleep?

The short answer, follow the plan outlined for you 😊

Food choices that include whole fresh foods and plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, avocado & olive oil as a primary fat source, and no dairy products. Red meat should be limited, and processed foods eliminated. And no Alcohol. Especially before bedtime – Many people think alcohol helps sleep, but in fact it has been shown to disrupt deep sleep patterns.

Certain key foods that are part of your customized IHC program are rich in melatonin, serotonin, and vitamin D. Preliminary research suggests that certain foods including fatty fish, eggs, turkey, nuts & seeds may improve sleep. All of these foods fit into a our IHC program.

The mechanisms by which these foods may enhance sleep are not fully understood. Fatty fish, like salmon, is rich in vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids. Both nutrients are known to help regulate serotonin and could prove to be important in sleep. Many nuts & seeds have a high melatonin concentration.

Takeaways

- Lack of sleep may make us eat more and make less healthy food choices.
- Your IHC plan is not only be healthy for your heart, brain, but also for sleep.
- Certain key foods that are part of your program are rich in melatonin, serotonin, and vitamin D, and these foods may enhance sleep.
- **If you're not getting 8 hours of sleep each night, it might be the cause of your weight gain in the past and any plateaus you might experience on your IHC program.**