

8 Effects of Sleep Deprivation on Your Health

By [Christy Matta, MA](#)



Many people today find that there are not enough waking hours to accomplish all we need to do. Work, long commutes, email, family responsibilities and household chores can eat up much of our waking time.

In order to get chores done or get in a little extra leisure time, many cut corners on sleep. We rationalize that a few hours here and there won't make much difference.

But sleep deprivation can have effects on both your mental and physical health.

So what are these negative effects of not getting enough sleep?

Negative Effects of Not Getting Enough Sleep

http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/02/13/8-effects-of-sleep-deprivation-on-your-health/#at_pco=smlrebh-1.0&at_si=5551f277a404c884&at_ab=per-2&at_pos=0&at_tot=4

1. **Lower stress threshold.** When you're tired, routine activities, such as stopping at the grocery store on the way home from work, walking the dog or picking up the house can feel like overwhelming tasks.
2. **Impaired memory.** Deep sleep fosters the formation of connections between cells, and REM sleep aids in memory formation. Students considering pulling an all-nighter to study for that big exam might do better to get some sleep.
3. **Trouble concentrating.** When you're dragging yourself through the day, it's hard to stay alert and focused. This is why we don't want our pilots and surgeons to lose too much sleep. Sleep-deprived people have trouble focusing on tasks and overestimate their performance.
4. **Decreased optimism and sociability.** Whether it's the effort we have to put into staying awake or other factors, sleep deprivation makes us less hopeful and less friendly.
5. **Impaired creativity and innovation.** A growing body of research suggests that sleep deprivation may have a particular effect on cognitive processes that rely on our experience of emotions.
6. **Increased resting blood pressure.** Several studies have found that sleep deprivation leads to increased blood pressure (Fujikawa et al., 2009) and even half a night of sleep loss has been reported to increase blood pressure in people with hypertension or pre-hypertension (Lusardi et al., 1996).
7. **Increased food consumption and appetite.** Research indicates that acute sleep loss enhances pleasure response processing in the brain underlying the drive to consume food (Benedict et al., 2012). The researchers raise the question of whether chronic sleep deprivation is linked to rising levels of obesity.
8. **Increased risk of cardiac morbidity.** A number of factors can lead to an increased risk of heart attacks, and sleep deprivation is one of them. During experimental sleep deprivation of healthy participants, increases in inflammation associated with the future development of cardiovascular disease occurred.

Why we experience all of these health problems related to sleep loss is not entirely known. The strain of staying awake, alterations in hormone levels that the body releases during sleep, upsetting the strong circadian drive for sleep, loss of REM sleep and other factors may all play a role.

Although scientists may still debate the function that sleep provides us, it is clear that lack of sleep is associated with mental and physical dysfunction.

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If you're one of the chronically tired or if you view sleep as a waste of precious time, it might be time to change the way you think about sleep. You may not be aware of what your brain and body are doing during sleep, but that time is vital to your ability to function and potentially to your life.

Need help with getting to or staying asleep? Try these [tips for shutting off your brain before bedtime](#).

References

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