

# Sleep

[gethearthealthy.ca/sleep-your-health](http://gethearthealthy.ca/sleep-your-health)

In this section you will learn:

- The importance of sleep
- The effects of poor sleep on your health and wellbeing
- How to improve your sleep hygiene

- Sleep supports your physical health, brain function and emotional wellbeing
- Evidence suggests that most adults require seven to nine hours of sleep per night

## Effects of Poor Sleep

### Cardiovascular Disease

- Increased risk of cardiovascular disease
- Increased blood pressure

One night of poor sleep can result in elevated blood pressure levels for up to 24 hours.

### Blood Sugar Levels

- Increased blood sugar levels
- Increased risk of developing diabetes, or difficulty managing existing diabetes

### Mental Health

- Increased risk of developing anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders

### Weight and Waist Circumference

- Increased hunger levels
- Altered food cravings
- Impacted exercise schedule

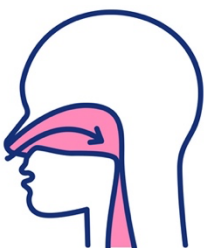
Sleep maintains a balance of the hormones that make you feel hungry (ghrelin) and full (leptin). When sleep-deprived, ghrelin levels increase, and leptin levels decrease. This leads to an increase in hunger levels.

### Cognitive Function

- Impaired memory and concentration
- Reduced ability to regulate mood and emotions
- Reduced productivity

### Immune System

- Decreased immune function
- Increased risk of becoming ill
- Prolonged recovery time



Sleep apnea is a condition in which your breathing is interrupted during sleep. These interruptions typically last between 10-20 seconds and can occur up to 100 times per hour! Individuals with sleep apnea may not be aware of these disruptions at the time, but often complain of fatigue, headaches, or waking with a dry mouth or sore throat.

## Improving Your Sleep Hygiene

- The term “sleep hygiene” refers to behavioural and environmental recommendations that promote healthy sleep.

### Physical Activity and Exercise

- Aim for 150 to 300 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise each week and resistance training a minimum of twice per week

### Manage Sleep Apnea

- If you have been diagnosed with sleep apnea, it is important to follow the recommendations of your doctor or sleep specialist
- This may include using a CPAP machine nightly

### Reduce Screen Time

- Screen time (TV, phone, tablet) is stimulating to the brain
- Avoid screen time one to two hours prior to bedtime

### Bedroom Setup

- Minimize light, noise, and clutter
- Reduce your home temperature a few degrees at night
- Ensure you are sleeping on a good mattress, with breathable bedding
- Consider including soothing colours, décor, and odours in your bedroom

### Avoid Alcohol, Caffeine, and Heavy Meals Before Bed

- While alcohol may initially increase drowsiness, it may cause restlessness one to three hours after consumption, disrupting sleep quality
- Eating a heavy meal before bed can lead to stomach pain, indigestion, or acid reflux
- Avoid drinking excess fluid before bedtime, to prevent having to urinate in the night

### Maintain a Regular Schedule

- Aim to wake up and go to bed at the same time every day
- A regular schedule helps your body to know when to release the hormones that assist you in waking up and falling asleep

### Relaxation Techniques

- Practice relaxation techniques such as meditation or deep breathing exercises
- Movement of the diaphragm stimulates the production of anti-stress hormones

### Ask Yourself

- How many hours of sleep do you get per night?  
Do you keep a regular sleep schedule?  
What is one thing you can do this week to improve your sleep hygiene?

