

# Top 10 Health Benefits of a Good Night's Sleep

- 1. A Healthy Heart:** Lack of sleep has been associated with high blood pressure & high cholesterol. Your heart will be healthier if you get 7-9 hours of sleep a night.
- 2. May Prevent Cancer:** People working late shifts have a higher risk for breast & colon cancer. The extra light exposure at night suppresses melatonin production. Melatonin is a hormone that makes us sleepy & appears to suppress the growth of tumors. Keep your bedroom dark to help produce melatonin.
- 3. Reduces Stress:** When your body is sleep deficient, it goes into a state of stress. This causes an increase in blood pressure & production of stress hormones. Higher blood pressure increases your risk for heart attacks & strokes. Stress hormones make it harder to sleep, so try relaxation techniques.
- 4. Reduces Inflammation:** Stress hormones increase inflammation & the risk for heart problems, cancer & diabetes. Inflammation contributes to the aging process.
- 5. Be More Alert:** A good night's sleep makes you feel energized & alert. Being active not only feels good, it ups the odds for another good night's sleep.
- 6. Improves Memory:** While resting, your brain processes your day, connecting events, sensory input, feelings & memories. Dreams & deep sleep are important for your brain to make memories & links.
- 7. Lose Weight:** People who sleep less than 7 hours a night are more likely to be overweight or obese. Hormones called ghrelin & leptin regulate appetite & are disrupted by lack of sleep.
- 8. Naps Make You Smarter:** Napping several times a week lowers the risk for heart disease, improves memory, improves cognitive function, improves mood, protects your health & makes you more productive.
- 9. Reduces Depression Risk:** Lack of sleep decreases serotonin production which can lead to depression.
- 10. Helps the Body Repair:** Sleep is a time for your body to repair damage caused by stress, ultraviolet rays & other harmful exposures. Your cells produce more protein while you sleep & the protein forms the building blocks for cells, allowing them to repair damage.

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