



Mediterranean Wellness

The Sleep-Diet Connection

Did you know that a lack of sleep can affect feelings of hunger? Decreased amounts of sleep cause reduced levels of protein in blood that manage the perception of feeling full and that regulate appetite. So, when you don't get enough sleep, your appetite and feeling of hunger increase.

The [National Sleep Foundation](#) reports that the average person needs between eight to nine hours of sleep each night. However, most of Americans only get seven hours citing stress, lifestyle obstacles or sleep disorders as the primary causes for the lack of sleep.

Since a good night's rest impacts your mental health and physical health, consider these tips to improve your sleep habits:

- **Prioritize sleep:** Decide what you need to change to get enough sleep. For instance, make an earlier bedtime to allow for an earlier wake up.
- **Keep it consistent:** Decide on times for going to bed and waking up. On weekends, try to stay as close as you can to these times. A consistent sleep schedule allows the body to get in sync with its natural pattern.
- **Prepare your body:** Don't eat, drink, or exercise within a few hours of your bedtime. Stick to quiet, calm activities.
- **Create a bedtime ritual:** Do the same things every night before going to sleep to teach your body the signals of bedtime.
- **Create a sleep sanctuary.** A bedroom should be cool, quiet and dark.
- **Nap right.** While a good nap can be beneficial, a nap that is too long or too close to bedtime can interfere with a regular sleep schedule.
- **Don't replace sleep:** Pills, vitamins or drinks cannot replace a good night's sleep. Caffeine can hurt sleep if it is consumed too close to bedtime. Nicotine and alcohol also interfere with sleep.

SOURCE: www.osteopathic.org/index.cfm?PageID=you_sleepdiet