


Sleep your way to skinny!

Can you actually lose weight by getting more shuteye? Repeated studies show the answer is yes.

Two studies done at our research center showed that having CFS or fibromyalgia results in an average weight gain of 32 ½ pounds. This happens for many reasons I'll discuss, along with showing you how to lose the weight, in an upcoming newsletter. But this week I want to focus on the role of sleep.

One of the causes of weight gain in fibromyalgia, in fact in the Western world in general, is the inability to get deep sleep. 

Inadequate sleep can occur for a number of reasons. Many Americans simply don't make enough time for adequate sleep. One hundred years ago, the average American got 9 hours of sleep a night. Anthropologists tell us that 5,000 years ago, the average was 11 to 12 hours a night, which is roughly the time from sunset to sunrise. When the sun went down, it was dark, boring, and dangerous outside. So people went to bed. When the sun came up, they woke up.

But the invention of candles allowed people to begin staying up past sundown, and that resulted in less sleep. Then light bulbs were created, followed by radio, TV and computers. We're now down to an average of 6 ½ hours sleep a night. This is simply not enough sleep to allow for proper tissue repair.

Some people get inadequate sleep because of poor sleep hygiene, often occurring because pain keeps them awake. For those with fibromyalgia, however, insomnia occurs because the sleep center in the brain (called the hypothalamus) is suppressed.

A poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation found that 58 percent of Americans had sleep difficulties. People who slept less than 6 hours a night felt more stressed, angry, sad and tired than those who got more sleep. And that's just a half an hour less than the average night's sleep, which has already dropped 30% from a century ago!

In addition to leaving you tired and achy, not getting enough sleep has been shown to cause significant weight gain and premature aging. Why? Because deep sleep is when our bodies make the "fountain of youth" *growth hormone*. The growth hormone helps turn fat into muscle, and this hormone is at low levels in people with fibromyalgia.

Another way inadequate sleep causes weight gain is that it affects hormones that regulate appetite. For example, one study looking at sleep restriction showed an 18% *decrease* in the appetite suppressing hormone leptin, along with a 28% *increase* in the appetite stimulating hormone ghrelin. These were associated with a 24% increase in hunger and 23% increase in appetite—especially for carbohydrates, which helped pack on the pounds. Other studies have shown an average 6 ½ pound weight gain and a 30% higher risk of obesity in those who don't get enough sleep.

So can you sleep your way to skinny and young? Indeed, it sure helps. That's why it's called "getting your beauty sleep!"

But getting sufficient sleep when you have fibromyalgia is easier said than done. In [a previous article](#), I gave an overview and how you can get eight hours of solid shuteye despite this illness. In upcoming articles, I'll also discuss sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, Upper Airway Resistance Syndrome (do you have a stuffy nose

while you're sleeping?), and an exciting new natural sleep treatment.

Stay tuned!

This article originally appeared on Dr. Teitelbaum's website, Vitality 101.