

Sleep restriction results in increased consumption of energy from snacks

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Bedtime restriction in an environment that promotes overeating and inactivity is accompanied by increased intake of calories from snacks. This behavior may contribute to the increased risk of weight gain and obesity associated with short sleep hours, according to a research abstract that will be presented on Wednesday at SLEEP 2008, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies.

The study authors led by Plamen Penev, MD, PhD, of the University of Chicago, followed 11 healthy volunteers who each completed two 14-day studies in random order at least three months apart. Studies were carried out in the laboratory with five-and-a-half or eight-and-a-half hour bedtimes and ad lib food intake.

According to the results, when bedtimes were restricted to five-and-a-half hours study subjects consumed more energy from snacks. The carbohydrate content of ingested snacks also increased for this group.

The authors concluded that factors such as longer exposure to an environment with unlimited access to food and changes in reward seeking and motivation may underlie the increased consumption of snacks associated with recurrent bedtime curtailment.

It is recommended that adults get between seven and eight hours of nightly sleep.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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