More reasons why getting a good night's sleep is important

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Not getting enough sleep not only makes our minds less alert, but our bodies too. Studies have suggested that losing several hours of sleep can slow the body's metabolism, but what about losing only a few hours? A team of researchers from the University of South Carolina and Arizona State University found that metabolic effects are seen even when sleep is shortened by two hours.

Xuewen Wang will present the study's findings in a poster session on Monday, March 30, at the Experimental Biology Meeting (Boston Convention and Exhibition Center).

In this study, volunteers slept as much as they needed or two hours less for three nights. The research team then evaluated the responsiveness of the volunteers' metabolism by having the volunteers drink a glucose drink and then measuring the glucose and insulin levels in the volunteers' blood. The researchers observed that sleeping two hours less increased insulin concentration, suggesting that cutting sleep even a little can alter metabolism.

From the researchers: "Our study was conducted in a group of young healthy adults after only three days of shortened sleep by two hours. The study findings are important because this amount of shortened sleep is often seen in real life. Our next step is to find out whether the sleep pattern of shortened sleep during the week and catching up sleep during the weekend affects glucose metabolism in longer term. We are also interested in finding out the responses in individuals who already have

impaired [glucose metabolism](link)."

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