

Snooze your way to better health

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Credit: Vera Kratochvil/public domain

Sleeping in on weekends need not be a guilty pleasure.

New research suggests that catching up on sleep after several nights of

missed Zs may help counter the risk of developing diabetes linked to sleep deprivation. A small study published this month in the journal *Diabetes Care* found that two nights of recovery sleep reversed the ill effects of short-term sleep debt.

University of Chicago scientists studied the [blood sugar levels](#) of 19 healthy young men who had skimped on sleep for four nights. Their [diabetes risk](#) increased by 16 percent after getting 4.3 hours of sleep each night. But later, they slept for 9.7 hours each night for two nights in a row. After the extra winks, blood tests confirmed their levels were normal again.

Diabetes remains a serious health problem, with nearly 1 in 10 Americans affected by the chronic disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Multiple studies have shown that lack of sleep worsens diabetes for those who already have it, and increases the risk of developing it in healthy people.

The University of Chicago study does not prove that sleeping in all the time on weekends will be enough to make up for [chronic sleep deprivation](#), the researchers noted. But it does indicate that a little extra [sleep](#) after a few off-nights can go a long way to restoring the body's ability to regulate blood sugars.

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