



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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Lifestyle Habits to Improve Sleep Quality

Allison Udris, M.S. LGPC, Megan Grimes, RD, and Samantha Reilly

When was the last time you had a good night's rest? According to the National Sleep Foundation, adults need between 7-9 hours a sleep per night. Not getting enough sleep can negatively affect your health in many ways. For instance, sleep deprivation (not getting enough sleep) can worsen your mood and contribute to symptoms of depression and anxiety. Lack of sleep can make it more difficult for you to focus and concentrate and can cause you to make poor choices in what you eat. It can have negative effects on your memory and ability to solve problems. Poor sleep quality also makes it more likely for you to feel fatigued and irritable throughout the day, or be at risk for falls or accidents.



Believe it or not, there are many lifestyle changes you can make to have more restful sleep. Here are just a few:

Light: Sometimes bright lights can be distracting and make us alert rather than sleepy. If you work overnight shifts and sleep during the day, perhaps look for "black-out curtains." Another option is to buy or make an eye pillow or eye mask so you can cover your eyes to block light from the windows.

Temperature: You may find it difficult to sleep if you feel too hot or too cold. Studies show that keeping your room cool makes it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Exercise: Exercise is very beneficial for both your mental and physical health. Being active during the day can help you fall asleep at night. However, exercising too hard too close to bedtime can elevate levels of endorphins ("feel good" hormones) in your body, making you feel wired and alert rather than sleepy at night. Try not to exercise too hard 2-3 hours before bedtime so your body has a chance to unwind and relax. If you need to exercise in the evening due to a busy schedule, try low-impact exercise (like yoga).

Food: Are you hungry before bed? Eat a small snack such as a piece of fruit or a string cheese stick instead of sugary foods or a large meal. Some people think certain foods (like turkey) will help them fall asleep. There is no proof that eating certain foods can help you sleep. Eating a healthy diet overall is the best way to get a good night's rest.

Drinks: You will want to avoid caffeine like coffee, tea, and soda, for six hours before bedtime. Decaf coffee or caffeine-free herbal teas, such as chamomile or lavender tea, are a better choice for relaxing before bed. You should also avoid alcoholic beverages. Although alcohol can make you feel sleepy, it can lead to a bad night of

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Breakfast makeover

The trick to doing a meal makeover is deciding which parts of the meal make it healthier



This sandwich is easy to get, but it is unhealthy.

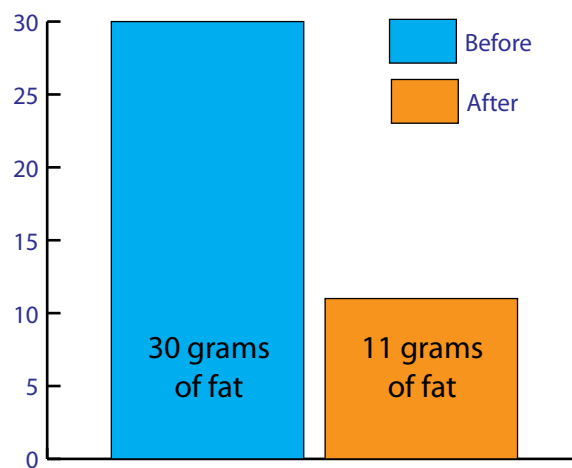
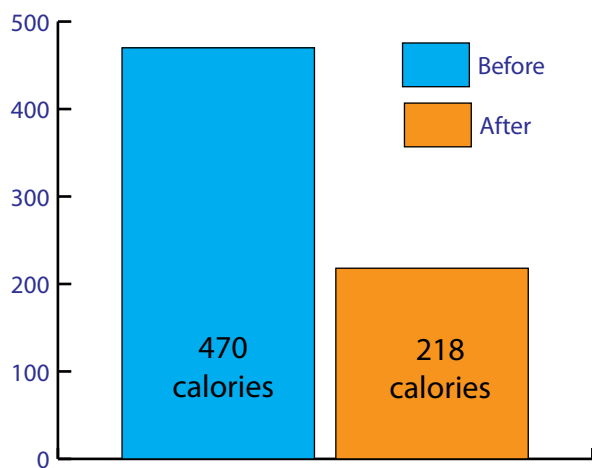
- Sausage and cheese add fat.
- The sandwich has lots of calories.

To makeover, change the meat and cheese to lower calories and fat.

This sandwich is simple to make!

Ideas to make it healthier:

- Cook eggs with cooking spray.
- Use low fat cheese to decrease calories and fat.
- Use whole wheat bread to increase fiber and make you feel fuller longer.



Breakfast meal makeovers:

The *before* meal is a McDonald's sausage egg and cheese biscuit.

The *makeover* meal has 2 large egg whites cooked without fat, 1 slice of low fat cheddar cheese, and 2 slices of turkey bacon on a 100% whole wheat sandwich thin.

Sleep continued from page 1

sleep. Alcohol prevents “REM sleep,” which is what helps you feel refreshed after sleeping.

Mood: Anxiety and worry make it difficult to fall asleep because you may feel like your thoughts are racing. Before bed, try relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing, a bath, or reading a book.

Electronics: Screens on electronics, like phones, tablets, computers, and TVs, can be distracting at bedtime because they emit “blue light,” which stimulates the body’s nervous system and makes you feel alert. It is recommended that you turn off these devices about 2 hours before bedtime so you have time to relax.

Sleep schedule: Going to bed at the same time each night can help your body settle for sleep. Additionally, it is important to avoid long naps during the day. Taking naps makes it difficult for your body to be tired at a reasonable time at night.

Bedroom environment: A clean, clutter-free room is best for sleep and relaxation. Another recommendation is to use your bedroom for sleep only. Avoid eating meals or doing work in your bedroom. These activities are stimulating, rather than relaxing. You want your bedroom to be a calming place!

If you try to make these lifestyle changes and still have trouble sleeping, there may be an underlying medical problem. You may want to talk to your doctor to determine if you have insomnia, sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, or another diagnosis that interferes with sleep. Your doctor can talk to you about treatment for these medical problems so you can get a better night’s sleep.



Home visits

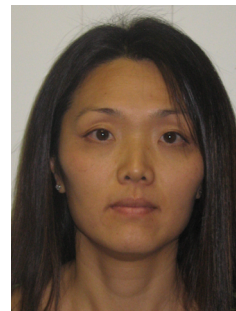
Cannot make it to the MRV? Consider a home visit

Several years ago we noticed that some participants were unable to visit the MRV for their examinations. Because we don’t want to leave anyone behind, we created the Home Visit Study. If you are unable to visit the MRV for any reason, then the home visit staff will examine you at your home at a mutually convenient time.

We added three new staff members to do our home visits, Jinea, Shannon, and Tracy. Jinea is a Nurse Practitioner and Shannon is a social worker. Jinea and Shannon will come to your home no matter where you live. So far they’ve examined participants in Baltimore and have travelled as far as Virginia, Florida, Utah and Arizona. Tracy is our home visit coordinator. She will contact you if we are considering you for a home visit. Tracy will work out all the details about your home examination.



Shannon



Jinea



Tracy



HANDLS
National Institute on Aging
5600 Nathan Shock Drive
Baltimore MD 21224-6825

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The Quarterly Newsletter for the HANDLS Community Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes in health over time. Using our medical research vehicles, we want to study as many people with different backgrounds as we can. We want this study to help us understand healthy aging by examining the effects of different backgrounds on changes in health over time. The information that we gather will help improve health and prevent disabilities. We want to do this for people from all backgrounds, particularly those in poor and minority communities.

**For information about our study call 1-877-677-9538
or visit our website *hands.nih.gov***

