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Sleep More and Quit Eating Sooner

Sleep more, eat the same, and lose weight. Seriously? That's what researchers are going to try to find out. At this point, there's little question that for most people, lack of sleep messes with the circadian rhythms and negatively impacts glucose metabolism.



But a different research team is looking at another element: how long you eat every day can impact your ability to lose weight. Researchers have done a pilot study looking at eating intervals: the time you eat your first meal until you stop eating for the day. For people devoted to their evening snacks, it can be 16 to 18 hours per day.

In the pilot study, subjects restricted their eating to a period of 10 to 12 hours per day. Over 16 weeks, subjects lost an average of seven pounds. One more thing: they didn't have to restrict their eating. They ate what they wanted, just in a shorter time interval every day.

This was a pilot study using an app that the researchers developed; they're recruiting 10,000 subjects to see if the idea will work on a greater scale while collecting additional data. Such as what? Well, maybe you actually eat fewer calories when you eat in smaller time frame even if you eat the same foods. By the way, if you want to be a subject, check out www.mycircadianclock.org to see if you qualify.

Back to the sleep portion. The part that interests me the most is the messed up carbohydrate metabolism by eating when your clock says it's time to sleep. Getting more sleep is not easy these days, but it just might be worth it.

We've all heard people say they cannot lose weight no matter what they do. Well, maybe getting a little more sleep and eating over fewer hours may help. Of course, if you're a diabetic or hypoglycemic, talk with your doctor. But here's something simple and cheap you could do: sleep more and eat the same over fewer hours. Will you lose weight? We don't know, but it's worth a try.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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