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Sweet Dreams Control Blood Sugar?

Bad sleep habits may set you up for poor blood sugar control.

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Written by RealAge experts and best-selling authors Michael F. Roizen and Mehmet C. Oz

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Sleeping for less than 6 hours or more than 9 hours per night was associated with an increased risk of diabetes in a recent study. These same poor sleep habits also were linked to impaired glucose tolerance, a condition marked by higher-than-normal blood sugar levels. Aim for 6 to 8 hours of sleep per night.

Researchers don't know exactly why poor sleep habits contribute to overall health risks. Hormones linked to sleep and wake cycles may play a role. A recent study revealed that sleep deprivation reduces levels of leptin, an appetite-suppressing hormone. If you have trouble sleeping, practice good sleep hygiene: go to bed at the same time every night, avoid caffeine or large meals late in the evening, exercise regularly earlier in the day, sleep in a cool, dark room, and unwind before bedtime. Getting the right amount of sleep is only one part of reducing diabetes risk. Exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, and following a healthful diet also can help reduce risk.

RealAge Benefit: Getting 6 to 8 hours of sleep per night can make your RealAge as much as 3 years younger.

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