

# Presenting... the dream diet

Here's all about the lazy girl's diet where weight loss depends on you getting enough sleep

**Y**ou hit the gym four times a week; you watch what you eat without cheating. Yet, your weight won't budge. All those late nights might be the culprit. The experts advise you to sleep off those extra kilos. Does it get any easier than that? If you think this is too good to be true, read on as we back up the claims with solid scientific facts.

## THE LINK BETWEEN SLEEP AND WEIGHT

Sleep deprivation plays havoc with the hormones

The hormone Ghrelin is responsible for hunger pangs while another hormone, Leptin, tells your brain when it's time to stop. When you don't get enough shut-eye, your Ghrelin levels increase and Leptin levels decrease. The result - an increased craving for food and a feeling of not being satiated despite eating more than you normally do!

Secondly, the growth hormone is secreted, for the most part, during the first round of sleep or the slow-wave sleep. This hormone plays a very important role in body weight as it controls the body's proportion of muscle and fat. When you don't get proper sleep, you secrete less of this hormone. In fact, just one week of sleep deprivation reduces the production of the growth hormone significantly. And low levels of growth hormone equal more fat. Also, as we age, the time we spend in deep sleep reduces, which translates to reduced growth hormone production. Add to that reduced hours of sleep and you significantly increase your chances of weight gain.

Also, a good restful sleep has the ability to de-stress the mind and body. Lack of sleep tends to cause physical stress. This leads to excessive

ply fidgeting are significantly reduced. As a result you burn fewer calories.

Also when the body senses low energy levels, it reacts by hoarding calories as fat, thereby making weight loss difficult.

## HOW MANY HOURS OF SLEEP DO I NEED?

If you are unsure how many hours you need, experiment, when you have the luxury to, by sleeping as much as you want for four nights in a row. Record how many hours you sleep on the fourth night. The hours of sleep you received that night will be the approximate number of hours you should try to get every night. That's because by the fourth night your body is refreshed and your body clock will reach its natural rhythm.

## WHAT IF I SLEEP LESS TO EXERCISE MORE?

The American Thoracic Society International Conference recently held in San Diego, California reported the following in a study - Women who don't get much sleep, up to five hours each night, are much more likely to have put on 33 lbs (15 kilos) over a 16 year period. This is 30 per cent more likely when compared to the women who managed to get seven hours sleep each night.

★ What surprised the researchers was that sleeping patterns had a much greater influence

