SLEEP AND HEART HEALTH

Rest for the body

Out of all the habits important for heart health, sleep may be the most important. Sleep is what allows the body to repair itself and function normally during the day.

Lack of Sleep has been linked to heart attack, asthma, and depression. During Sleep your blood pressure decreases, blood sugar is controlled, and the hypothalamus (the part of the brain that controls hunger) is affected. Not getting enough sleep can also lead to High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, and Obesity.

Sleep deprivation has been shown in research to contribute to atherosclerosis.

Reduced sleep triggering increased inflammation allowing plaque to form and the hardening of artery walls. This damage makes blood vessels less effective at delivering oxygen and nutrients to the heart and body.

Having less than 7 hours of sleep has been observed to cause Heart Failure when the heart is not able to pump enough blood through the body. Once blood flow is reduced and plaque builds, Heart Attack and Stroke can also occur as nutrient and oxygen delivery is affected by blocked blood flow to heart muscle and brain cells. (...)

Sleep's effect on the glucose metabolism means that it can not only contribute to the development of diabetes, but makes it more difficult to control blood sugar in a person with diabetes, increasing the possibility of blood vessels to be damaged.

Over time sleep problems can cause sleep Apnea which stops breathing during sleep affecting blood oxygen levels and increasing the risk for Heart Disease. Less Sleep can also cause Insomnia making an individual have trouble falling asleep leading to unhealthy habits that can hurt the heart and mind.

Insomnia and sleep apnea are also commonly found among pregnant women and are associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular problems before and after pregnancy.

Most people need at least 7 to 8 hours of undisrupted sleep a night. These hours are needed for the body to repair itself, decrease inflammation, and normalize hormone and blood sugar levels.

Sleep can be affected by work shift changes, stress, mood, and mental health. When an individual's circadian rhythm is disrupted, sleep hours interrupted, it is called Chronodisruption.

Better Sleep is achieved by having a regular sleep schedule, being active, getting enough sunlight, keeping a cool dark and quiet bedroom, and making sure to not eat or drink too late at night. Exercise, less screen time, and avoidance of caffeine and alcohol also help in getting better sleep. These practices are called Sleep Hygiene.

Continually not getting enough sleep has been shown to increase the risk of heart disease by 48%. This observation was made through cases of heart disease in those with sleep disorders.

"A Full 12 Lead ECG will show if there are any signs of heart disease, define, and locate it. That information will help you identify the current cardiovascular state of your patient's heart, and affect what diet or exercise program you may recommend to your patient. You will want to monitor your patient's heart alongside any programs you may recommend to your patient over time." - Roger E. Nasiff Ph.D.

Resources Linked

How Does Sleep Affect Your Heart Health?

How Sleep Deprivation Affects Your Heart

Why You Need to Get Enough Sleep for a Healthy Heart

Sleep Duration Linked to Cardiovascular Disease

Sleep plays an important role in heart health

How Sleep Affects Your Heart