

## - Sleep / Diabetes

## 5 things

There are so many things that can disrupt our sleep. Factor in some common diabetes symptoms and you have a recipe for poor quality sleep.

### 1 Chasing the Sandman

Studies have shown that up to a third of people living with diabetes also suffer from a related sleep disorder. Some of the most common factors that disturb sleep include frequent nighttime urination, nocturnal hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose at night), peripheral neuropathy (nerve damage in hands and feet leading to pain, numbness and tingling), restless leg syndrome and sleep disordered breathing (such as sleep apnoea).

### 2 Essential zzz's

The importance of good quality sleep cannot be overemphasised. Sleeping less than six to seven hours a night has been linked to an increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. Sleep deprivation has been linked to high BGLs due to its effect on insulin resistance and cortisol levels. Likewise, elevated sugars can disrupt sleep patterns. Inadequate sleep can also increase your

appetite and make you crave "comfort" foods that are high in fat and carbohydrates, perpetuating the cycle of elevated BGLs and poor sleep patterns.

### 3 How much is enough?

The amount of sleep needed per night varies on an individual basis, with factors like age, genetics and daily activities playing a part. In general, seven to eight hours is considered normal for most adults, keeping in mind that over-sleeping can have a similar impact on health as under-sleeping. You can generally tell if you are getting enough sleep by how well you function throughout the day. If you still feel very tired and/or are not functioning well, despite getting enough sleep, then it's time to pay your health care professional a visit.

### 4 Nightly snorchestra

Sleep apnoea is the most common sleep disorder affecting people with diabetes.

There is a strong link between the two conditions and while one doesn't necessarily cause the other, you are more likely to experience sleep apnoea if you are overweight. Many people who suffer from sleep apnoea are unaware of it, with common symptoms being snoring and feeling tired and unrefreshed after sleeping.

### 5 Slumber party

Thankfully, there's a lot you can do to improve your sleep:

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet to help manage BGLs
- Exercise regularly, 30 minutes a day has been shown to improve sleep quality and duration
- Introduce a regular sleep schedule (consistency with sleeping and waking times)
- Avoid eating large meals and consuming alcohol and caffeine close to bedtime
- Ensure your bedroom is a sleep-friendly environment - dark, quiet and cool
- Avoid screen time for at least an hour before bed
- Seek treatment for sleep apnoea if necessary

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# Diabetes & sleep

