

Sleep Superheroes



SLEEP
SUPER-
HEROES
LIVE WELL UTAH

A light supper, a good night's sleep, and a fine morning have often made a hero of the same man who, by indigestion, a restless night, and a rainy morning, would have proved a coward.

—Lord Chesterfield

As parents, we know our children need a healthy, balanced diet to perform well in school. However, do we recognize what a vital role *sleep* plays in student performance? Teenagers extend their waking hours to accommodate school, work, sports and social life, cutting back on hours meant for sleep. Yet, whether they are teenagers or younger kids, even Superheroes need sleep to be at their best! Research shows that:

- Shortened sleep times seem to cause higher levels of anxiety (Silva, et al. 2017).
- Shortened sleep times seem to cause an increase in feelings of hunger, but a *decrease* in food enjoyment (Silva, et al. 2017).
- A one-hour increase of sleep time is associated with a 14 percent *decrease* in the odds of being obese (Timmermans, et al., 2017).
- Teenagers who consistently went to bed late craved more high-sugar foods at breakfast, and then continued to eat 53 percent more food throughout the day (Asarnow, et al., 2017).
- These same teenagers, when they altered their habits and went to bed earlier, voluntarily chose healthier foods for breakfast (Asarnow, et al., 2017).

Less anxiety, decrease in obesity, healthier food choices...there's no question that sleep should be an important part of your Superhero's diet!

This article was written by Cathy Merrill, Family and Consumer Sciences, Extension Assistant Professor, USU Extension, Utah County

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