

Why Your Heart Loves Sleep

Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the world and has been for decades. There is strong evidence that long-term short sleep (less than 7 hours per night) is partly to blame for this. The effects of short sleep on the heart can be measured after just one night as well as after decades of chronically choosing to sleep less than the recommended 7 to 9 hours per night. Here's some evidence.

After a night of less than 6 hours of sleep, your systolic blood pressure will be measurably higher because your heart rate will increase. (The experiment that found this result was conducted on young and fit people with a healthy cardiovascular system.) High blood pressure has a causal relationship with heart disease, among other ailments.

O. Tochikubo, A. Ikeda, E. Miyajima, and M. Ishii, "Effects of insufficient sleep on blood pressure monitored by a new multibiomedical recorder," *Hypertension* 27, no. 6 (1996): 1318-24.

Large-scale studies that control for other known cardiac risk factors show a strong correlation between short sleep and developing heart disease, suffering a cardiac arrest, or dying from heart disease.

Walker, M. (2017). *Why We Sleep*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. p. 165.

Most studies investigating deficient sleep over the last 50 years have observed an overactive sympathetic nervous system. This causes a prolonged yea