Night, Night

Not enough sleep in childhood can lead to weight gain.

June 1, 2009 By Kellee Terrell

While poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle play major roles in this country's obesity epidemic, researchers may have found another risk factor—lack of sleep. According to a recent study from Boston's Harvard Medical School, babies who slept fewer than 12 hours a day were twice as likely to be overweight by age 3 as opposed to well-rested infants. And a report from New Zealand found that children who slept fewer than 11 hours a night were more likely to be obese in adulthood than those who slept longer.

Why? Researchers believe tired kids don't have enough energy to be active and that sleep deprivation alters the hormonal ability to suppress one's appetite, which could lead to overeating. Either way, a shortage of zzz's has a long-term effect.

Real Health suggests:
Babies and toddlers get 12 or more hours of sleep per night, kids ages 5 to 12 get 11 hours of sleep and teens receive 8.5 to 9.5 hours. At bedtime, turn off or remove distracting electronics, such as TVs, video game players and cell phones, that are in your child's room. Studies show they can sabotage a good night's sleep.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/sleep-weight-gain-16703-7978