

Take your next step to connect to us. Email us if you have an interesting story to share related to career.

facebook.com/  
thedailystar.nextstep  
Email: nextstep@thedailystar.net

Download the  
PDF version  
from our  
website.

The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 2015

e-mail: nextstep@thedailystar.net

# NEXT STEP

## OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE SNACKING DISORDER

*And mind tricks to stay in shape*



### SUGAR BLUES

The sugars you should be looking out for are glucose, dextrose and sucrose, and highly refined sugars found in candy and packaged baked goods. These are rapidly used up and make your body break down stored sugar in the liver, leading to sugar highs and lows that make you fidgety, irritable, inattentive and even sleepy—all symptoms of what I was experiencing. Best sugars for the brain are complex carbs like starches and fructose that take time to break down and provide a long release of energy. Just remember, oatmeal, noodles and rice are better than cereals, biscuits and chanchur.

cartons stacked to the brim with mouth-watering goodness.

### VARIETY IS NOT THE SPICE OF WEIGHT LOSS

Diamond-shredded, multicoloured, planet-shaped—I had no remorse snapping up two or more brands of cereal, especially if they came in the cute and equally enticing mini-packs. Variety actually makes you eat more. But research shows that giving people simply three options instead of one, increases their consumption by 23%. And sure enough,

back home I was mixing it up. Instead, cherry-pick your favourite snacks and stick of picking up every alluring tube, packet and tin at the store.

### FOOD LABELS

Notoriously low on fibre, we're promptly sold on the entire whole-grain charade that accompanies the front of most brightly coloured cereal boxes. In fact most of the packed snacks we buy are about 25% whole-grain, and about half of the carbs are just sugars. Food manufacturers want

to make their foods appear healthier because they know that's what consumers want. It's reassuring for those of us who care about our health, but they're really just toying with our confirmation bias. Next time you're out shopping for snacks, keep an eye out for labels because sugar can be masqueraded under many confusing synonyms, including high fructose corn syrup or HFCS, molasses, and even fruit juice. Also, a recent study in the States showed that labels users who did not exercise displayed a greater likelihood of weight loss than non-label users who did exercise.

### LEAVE THE BREAKFAST CEREALS FOR BREAKFAST

I notice the fine-print on the front of my empty Honey Stars box as I am writing this article. It clearly says late-night snacking is bad for you, but who was going to stop me at 4am in the morning? High-fat foods eaten during the night (when you should be sleeping) make you gain significantly more weight than during the day. The diet-takeaway here is to teach yourself to think of the kitchen as being closed for the night, and brush your teeth – you will want to eat less with a freshly cleansed mouth. If the craving's unbearable, wait around 10 minutes. If you're still famished, reach for something small like berries, mini apples or cut-up carrots.

### MAKE EATING A HASSLE

The best way to stop yourself from overindulging is to make eating food more of a hassle and to change what's reachable. Got M&Ms at your desk at work? Keep snacks in your shelves? Have soft drinks sitting out? Move them out of sight. Don't bring

in snacks into your bedroom, and take a walk to the cafeteria at work if you're feeling peckish. Swap your dinner plate for a smaller one, and never eat out of a can or a packet.

Also, try making your own food. The most readily available yet healthy cereal in the country is Quaker's oatmeal, so if you're like me, have some oatmeal with fruit and honey instead of the wheat curls and chocolate-coated corn puffs. Or stuff some popcorn in a bag and put it in the oven.

### POPCORN AND TV

I admit to refilling my ginormous cereal bowl three times in row while watching the Christmas special of Downton Abbey. Distractions of all kinds make us eat, forget how much we eat, and extend how long we eat—even when we're not hungry. Participants in a research ate 28% more popcorn if they watched TV for an hour instead of for a half hour. Never ever eat in front of the PC or the TV. But if you're in front of a screen a lot anyway, get up and walk around the room or office every 20 minutes. This is also about the amount of time it takes for the fullness signal to kick in - time to swig a couple more glasses of Pepsi. The same amount of food can make you feel or still hungry depending on how quickly you eat it. An easy trick is to chew on your microwave pizza 15 times instead of 12.

We eat because of packages and plates, names and numbers, labels and shapes, colours and smells – not because we're hungry. So next time you think food is the cure to all your ailments, let your body know who's the boss.

AMIYA HALDER

## 6 HABITS THAT WILL PUT YOU STRAIGHT TO SLEEP

*It's no question that sleep affects workplace performance and productivity, but the lack of sleep over time has been associated with anxiety, depression, and a shortened life span. Get back on track this new year with a healthier sleep schedule.*

**3 OUT OF 4 WORKERS** who report not getting adequate sleep say that sleepiness affects their work.

**10 DAYS WITHOUT SLEEP CAN KILL YOU!** SLEEP DEPRIVATION CAN ALSO:

Slow down your reaction time and make you less alert.

**DROWSY DRIVING IS RESPONSIBLE FOR 20% OF ALL MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES**

Increase the risk for developing serious medical conditions.

**PEOPLE GETTING LESS THAN 6 HOURS OF SLEEP AT NIGHT FACE 30% GREATER RISK OF OBESITY, DIABETES AND HEART DISEASE**

Reduce your susceptibility to illnesses. **VACCINES AND ANTIBIOTICS ARE NOT AS EFFECTIVE WHEN YOU GET SICK**

Make concentrating, solving problems and making decisions harder. Turns you anxious, irritable and difficult to get along with

### 1 PICK A TIME TO GO TO BED AND WAKE UP

Stick to it, even on weekends. Bedtimes aren't just for children. They condition your mind to recognise that it is time for you to start unwinding and relaxing.

### 3 MAKE SURE YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY COMFY

Only 8% of people practice this, but the best way to sleep is on your back because it puts your head, neck and spine in a neutral position.

Consider replacing your mattress and pillows with new ones that provide proper support for your back and neck.

The best temperature to keep your room at when you go to bed is between 15 and 23°C, because your body temperature naturally drops when you start to nod off.

### 2 GIVE YOURSELF A TECH CURFEW

Even better, move your electronic devices out of sight altogether. Gadgets emit blue light, which delays the production of melatonin, the sleep-wake cycle hormone.

Reading, on the other hand, helps facilitate sleep by forcing you to detach yourself from electronics – items designed to keep the mind visually stimulated – and into a relaxed activity.

A lot of people watch TV to wind down for sleep. However, watching TV before bedtime encourages you to stay up later, harming the sleep cycle. For a change, listen to something that helps you relax (hint: binaural beats or Sigur Ros.)

### 4 WATCH YOUR NIGHTLY EATING HABITS

Lay off coffee and chocolate at least 4 to 6 hours before bedtime. Caffeine is a stimulant that can block sleep neurotransmitters, causing insomnia. So is nicotine. Try herbal teas, which have a sedative effect, such chamomile.

Spicy foods can also keep you up by causing heartburn and indigestion.

Snack on foods that contain tryptophan, for example, yogurt, milk, bananas and eggs. Tryptophan is an amino acid that helps produce serotonin, which in turn makes melatonin.

### 5 BUST A MOVE

Do some light stretches right before bed to loosen up and remove bodily tensions. Another option is to contract and release all the major muscles in your body. Start by tensing up your toes, then the muscles in your feet, moving up to your legs, arms, and finishing on your neck. Strenuous exercise, however, should be avoided within 3 hours of bedtime.

### 6 DON'T HIT THE SNOOZE BUTTON

The extra sleep you get after waking up once already is fragmented, making it low quality. You also prepare the body for a new sleep cycle that you won't have time to finish, resulting in fatigue throughout the day.

Set your alarm for when you actually need to get up. Try to set it for the same time every day. This regularity will hopefully lead to you waking up on your own.

**ONLY MUTANTS DO WELL ON 6 HOURS OF SLEEP AT NIGHT...**

because of a gene that appears in only 3% of the population. Everyone else between the ages of 19 and 55 needs 8 hours of sleep.

**SO CLOCK IN YOUR SLEEP DEBT AND BE ON TOP OF YOUR GAME.**

Readers will be able to subscribe to one free e-learning course each week via the Next Step webpage, and afterwards avail special discounts on regular e-learning courses.

**OLT** ONLINE LEARNING TOOLS

## ENERGIZE YOUR CAREER WITH E-LEARNING

To take the free OLT course of the week, visit: <http://www.oltstore.com/nextstep/>

## This week's free course is "Personal Productivity: Self-organization and Overcoming Procrastination"

A lack of organization, coupled with a tendency to procrastinate, can be a vicious cycle. Becoming disciplined, setting priorities, and eradicating time-wasting activities can reduce the desire to put things off. The key to becoming your most productive self is to embrace organization and to overcome procrastination. This course introduces you to ways of becoming organized to help you accomplish more with the hours you have. It examines the common reasons for procrastination and ways you can overcome them in the workplace. The course presents ways to develop the discipline required to get things done, guidance on setting priorities, as well as approaches to overcommitment.