Sleep may not be on the list of priorities for a lot of teens, but maybe it should be. A new study [2] published in the journal *Pediatrics*, found that increased sleep time may lead to a decrease in adolescent obesity, and those teenagers with the highest BMIs would see the greatest benefits.

Researchers followed about 1400 ninth graders over a period of four years. In interviews conducted over six month intervals, researchers collected information about the teens heights, weights and sleep habits, both during the week and on weekends. After controlling for physical activity, screen time, sex, race and socioeconomic status, they found that getting more sleep resulted in decreases in BMI.

Lead study author, Jonathan A. Mitchell, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania says, Based on our observational study, we predict that increasing the duration of sleep to 10 hours from eight would lead to a 4 percent reduction in obesity among U.S. children.

ACSH’s Assistant Director of Public Health, Ariel Savransky, had this to say. It seems logical, knowing what we know about the effects of sleep deprivation, that getting more sleep could possibly lead to weight loss in obese teens. But besides obesity, sleep deprivation has been associated with numerous other chronic diseases including high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke, among others, and has also been known to disrupt the balance of key hormones that control appetite. So even though it may not be realistic to recommend a teen get ten hours of sleep a night, just trying to get a little more sleep could lead to improved functioning in school, increased energy, and overall improved health in teens.