



spotlight on health

Body Clock Breakthroughs Can Benefit Your Health

(NAPSA)—Tapping into your body's secret rhythm may help you slim down, rev up and feel better than ever.

“Research has shown that our internal clocks have a steady, built-in rhythm,” says Michael Smolensky, Ph.D., professor of environmental physiology at University of Texas-Houston School of Public Health. “That means there’s a predictable, 24-hour cycle to virtually every single bodily function.”

Here are some ways to get in sync with your body clock from the editors at *First For Women*:

- Eat a big breakfast (and a light lunch and dinner) to lose a pound a week. Research shows that food eaten early is converted into heat and energy, while food eaten in the evening is quickly stored as fat.

- Forget about eating balanced meals to make cravings vanish. The body's ability to control blood sugar changes dramatically over the course of a day, and eating a protein-rich breakfast and lunch is one of the best ways to keep it stable.

- Wake up at the same time every day to have more energy all week. Your internal clock controls your production of the sleep-triggering hormone melatonin. Keeping the gap between your wake-up time and bedtime constant ensures that melatonin peaks in the evening hours when you really need it.

- Soak up the morning sun to get more done. Bask in 30 minutes of sun first thing by eating breakfast beside a bright window, drinking your coffee on the patio or going out for a walk. Morning light exposure sets your internal clock, so your body temperature, energy level and alertness stay



It's all a matter of timing. Learning more about your internal clock may be good for you.

high during the day.

- Plan your toughest thinking early to be 30 percent more effective. Studies show that mental alertness peaks around 10 a.m., making mid-morning the best time to deal with difficult subjects.

- Tackle medical tests early in the day to get more accurate results. The morning hours are the best time to get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked. Both can vary by 10 points or more over the day but since high morning readings are the ones strongly associated with health problems, they're the ones you want to catch and treat.

- See your dentist in the afternoon to optimize pain relief. Research shows that local anesthetics, such as lidocaine, last three times longer if given between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.