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OCTOBER + NOVEMBER 2020

HEALTH

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Better Sleep

BETTER HEALTH

Poor Sleep Impacts Health in Many Ways.

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Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

- The CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.
- Cloth face coverings are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings.
- Cloth face coverings should NOT be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

— Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NOTE: For the latest information and stats, visit, [coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).



ONLINE ARTICLES

Struggling to catch enough zzz's? There's an app for that!

Whether you want to drift off to sweet sounds of nature, white noise, or a bedtime story, there's an app for you. Visit [kcourhealthmatters.com](https://www.kcourhealthmatters.com) to learn what's available.



Addressing Sleep-Related Health Disparities in African American men PART 2 from October print edition.

The underlying factors that drive differences in sleep among racial and ethnic groups should not be ignored. Visit [kcourhealthmatters.com](https://www.kcourhealthmatters.com) to learn more.

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*The amount of sleep
you need depends on several factors:
your age, lifestyle, health,
and whether you have been
getting enough
sleep recently.*

COVER STORY

Better Sleep Better Health

If you have difficulty sleeping, you are not alone. A reported 50-70 million US adults have a sleep disorder. Understand the causes and symptoms that signal the need for medical intervention.



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By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

Snoring is no laughing matter. Aside from being annoying it can affect one's health.

Sleep Well . . .

It's crucial to living healthy.

Does this sound familiar? You're tired. You could lay your head on a desk right now and fall asleep immediately. You went to bed late, had trouble falling asleep and woke up too early. Tonight, you're wondering if it will be more of the same.

Unfortunately, sleep deprivation affects millions of Americans. And, sleep is a serious business, with the sleep aids market estimated to reach up to USD \$114.15 billion by 2025. Another surprise is that there's a disparity of higher numbers of sleep disorders in African American men. We share insights on Page 7.

In this edition of **Our Health Matters™**, we take a look at one of the fundamental human needs — sleep. Getting at least 7 hours of quality rest each night is essential for good health. Sleep provides the foundation for all of our daily habits and decisions. Sleep deprivation (not getting enough sleep) can negatively affect our mood and temperament, as well as our ability to focus on daily tasks.

In this time of personal stress due to Covid-19 and other contributing factors, we help you understand sleep and some of the more common disorders. We hope once you are armed with a better understanding about the benefits of sleep, you will take steps to make necessary lifestyle changes.

The bottom line is that a good night's sleep is within the reach of most of us.



Be well, stay healthy.

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO

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P.O Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131
816.361.6400
kcourhealthmatters.com

PUBLISHER
Ruth Ramsey
ruthramsey@
kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING
Donna Wood
dwood@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jeanene Dunn
jdunn@kcourhealthmatters.com

HEALTH WRITER
Tenille Lawson, PharmD, BCPS
tlawson@kcourhealthmatters.com

EVENT COORDINATOR
Barbara Bartholomew
bebe@kcourhealthmatters.com

HAVING AN EVENT? GOT QUESTIONS?
info@kcourhealthmatters.com

WANT TO ADVERTISE?
info@kcourhealthmatters.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute
Robert G. Marx, DDS
Sydney Walls



WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Send us your suggestions for health topics you would like to see in *Our Health Matters*. Also share what you enjoy about the magazine. Email us at info@kcourhealthmatters.com or write to us at

Our Health Matters
PO Box 5425
Kansas City, MO 64131

REHABILITATION CAN'T WAIT, EVEN DURING A PANDEMIC

The world is changing, and we understand that there are many uncertainties for patients, especially when it comes to their health and safety as they navigate their healthcare journeys. Our hospital is here to provide your patients with the advanced therapy and care they need to return to independence.

Who needs treatment at a rehabilitation hospital?

Despite all the changes in healthcare at this time, people will still have strokes and other debilitating conditions or injuries that can benefit from the intense therapy and around-the-clock nursing that a rehabilitation hospital provides.

These patients still need to seek medical care during this pandemic and many of them will still need rehabilitation afterwards to regain strength and independence.



Can't Sleep?

How to Decide if a Prescription Sleep Aid is Right for You

If you have trouble sleeping, you are not alone. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, up to 33% of adults experience insomnia — lying awake at night despite trying to fall asleep or trying to stay asleep. Insomnia leads to daytime confusion, irritability, and fatigue; losing sleep long-term may increase risks of obesity, hypertension and heart disease.

If you are not getting 8 hours of sleep at night because you are having trouble falling or staying asleep, it may be time to talk with your doctor about sleep medications.

Trouble falling asleep?

Oftentimes, difficulty falling asleep is related to your body's circadian rhythm — or normal sleep pattern. Ramelteon is a non-habit-forming prescription medication, similar to melatonin, designed to get you back to your regular cycle. You should take it at least 30 minutes before bedtime on an empty stomach. Although side effects such as headache or dizziness have been reported, many people who take ramelteon can get to sleep faster without feeling sleepy the next day.

Other prescription medications called “Z-drugs” are also used to improve sleep onset time. Examples include eszopiclone, zolpidem and zaleplon. They are effective, however, reports of abnormal sleep behaviors — like driving or wandering outside in the cold without knowing it — prompted the FDA to issue a warning of caution for this class of medication. You can also have daytime drowsiness that impairs your ability to drive or concentrate the next day.

Trouble staying asleep?

Sleep occurs in stages. When you wake up during the night — especially without falling back to sleep — these stages are interrupted, leaving you feeling groggy and fatigued. Amitriptyline, trazodone and mirtazapine are prescription medications used to help get a full night's sleep. Be aware, your ability to drive or fully concentrate may be affected the next day. Try the first dose on a night when you have minimal activity the following morning.

When stress levels are abnormally high, such as with the loss of a loved one, commonly used medications temazepam, estazolam, and triazolam may help you sleep short-term. Taking these medications longer than a few weeks increases the risk of dependence and withdrawal. If long-term treatment is needed, it is safer to consider cognitive behavioral therapy or relaxation techniques.

A full night's sleep is essential for good health. Considering a sleep medication may be necessary if you are having symptoms of insomnia. Always consult with your doctor, or healthcare provider for guidance. •



By Tenille L. Lawson
PharmD, BCPS

...LOSING SLEEP LONG-TERM MAY INCREASE RISKS OF OBESITY, HYPERTENSION AND HEART DISEASE.

Race and Sleep Disorders — What's the Connection?

Studies reveal common themes of higher levels of both physical and emotional stress impacting sleep disparities in people of color.

Racial and ethnic disparities are a developing field in sleep research with much still to be learned about this important topic. *Our Health Matters™* offers an introduction to the current research about the causes and implications of the unequal burdens of sleeping problems in America.

How is Sleep Different Among Racial and Ethnic Groups?

The National Sleep Foundation's *Sleep in America* Poll gathers responses about key aspects of sleep behavior. In 2010, the poll highlighted distinct responses from racial and ethnic groups and found that black respondents reported the least amount of sleep on weekdays.

Higher rates of sleeping problems have also been found

Many of these factors contribute to other health problems that occur with greater frequency in racial and ethnic minorities, such as a greater risk of obesity and diabetes. These conditions may have a link with sleeping problems and create greater health risks in minority populations.

among Hispanic and Latino people. As was found with black people compared to whites, Hispanic and Latino people generally report an increased prevalence of low-quality sleep, short sleep and long sleep.

There is also evidence that there is a higher burden of sleeping problems in American Indian and Alaska Natives, Asians, and Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. To date, though, the extent of research in these groups is more limited, com-

plicating the ability to draw clear conclusions about sleep disorders among them.

What Are Potential Causes of Health Disparities in Sleep?

Because of the wide range of factors that can influence sleep, it's difficult to know with certainty what causes the differences in sleep among racial and ethnic groups in the United States. However, the disparities in sleep are generally not found when people sleep in controlled environments (such as sleep labs), which points to a strong influence from social, economic, and cultural factors.

Researchers studying health disparities point to a number of potential causes of the higher rates of sleeping problems for people of color. A common theme among many of these factors is higher levels of both physical and emotional stress.

Many of these factors contribute to other health problems that occur with greater frequency in racial and ethnic minorities, such as a greater risk of obesity and diabetes. These conditions may have a link with sleeping problems and create greater health risks in minority populations.

Why Do Racial and Ethnic Sleep Disparities Matter?

Sleep is critical to virtually every aspect of health and wellness. Understanding the ways that sleeping problems affect racial and ethnic minorities can empower public health officials to design better programs to address sleep and other health disparities that may be related to it. Because there are often clear steps that can be taken to improve sleep, it may be an effective focus for strategies to reduce inequalities in the health system. •

Read part 2 of this insightful article [What Are Next Steps For Addressing Sleep-Related Health Disparities?](https://www.kcourhealthmatters.com/next-steps-for-addressing-sleep-related-health-disparities) online at [kcourhealthmatters.com](https://www.kcourhealthmatters.com).

Source: Sleep Foundation 2020



Your Vote. Your Voice. Our Fight.

Not only has the pandemic put everyone's basic health at risk, it's also impacting our jobs and retirement security – and it's disproportionately affecting African Americans, especially those 50-plus. That's why AARP Missouri is fighting for your voice to be heard. AARP Missouri wants to make sure that you know all of your voting options and that all Americans – from working parents to family caregivers to seniors in nursing homes – can vote safely whether they choose to vote from home or in-person.



For more information on how you can vote safely and make your voice heard, visit aarp.org/MOVotes facebook.com/AARPMissouri | [@AARPMissouri](https://twitter.com/AARPMissouri) | aarp.org/MO



A Place to Heal and Restore Lives of Highly Traumatized, Homeless Mothers and Their Children.

“When I first arrived at Sheffield Place, it was too much. I hated the rules, I hated the chores... I didn’t like the fact that someone was telling me what I needed to do. But, that was exactly what I needed. My children are safe.”

— Sheffield client

Empowering highly traumatized homeless families to heal and become self-sufficient has been the mission of Sheffield Place for nearly 30 years. Sheffield Place is the only treatment and supportive housing program in Kansas City that exclusively serves highly traumatized homeless mothers and their children. Families are impacted by such things as generational poverty and homelessness, high levels of trauma, mental health and addiction issues, domestic violence, low educational attainment, and felony convictions, among others.

Sheffield Place has an impressive and measurable record:

- 91% of mothers who stayed 30 days or more were clean and sober at discharge.
- 80% of mothers who stayed 30 days or more improved their mental health.

Of families in the community-based Aftercare program,

- 93.5% maintained permanent housing and maintained or increased income.
- 84% remained abstinent from alcohol and other drugs.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

In 2019 Sheffield Place scored a perfect 100 from Charity Navigator in recognition of its effectiveness, transparency, and financial accountability. Charity Navigator is one of the largest and most-utilized evaluators of charities in the United States. Sheffield Place is the only Kansas City nonprofit to earn this distinction and one of only 67 nonprofits nationwide to achieve that distinction.

The single-minded focus of empowering families to heal from their trauma and gain the skills they need to become self-sufficient is what drives Sheffield Place success.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

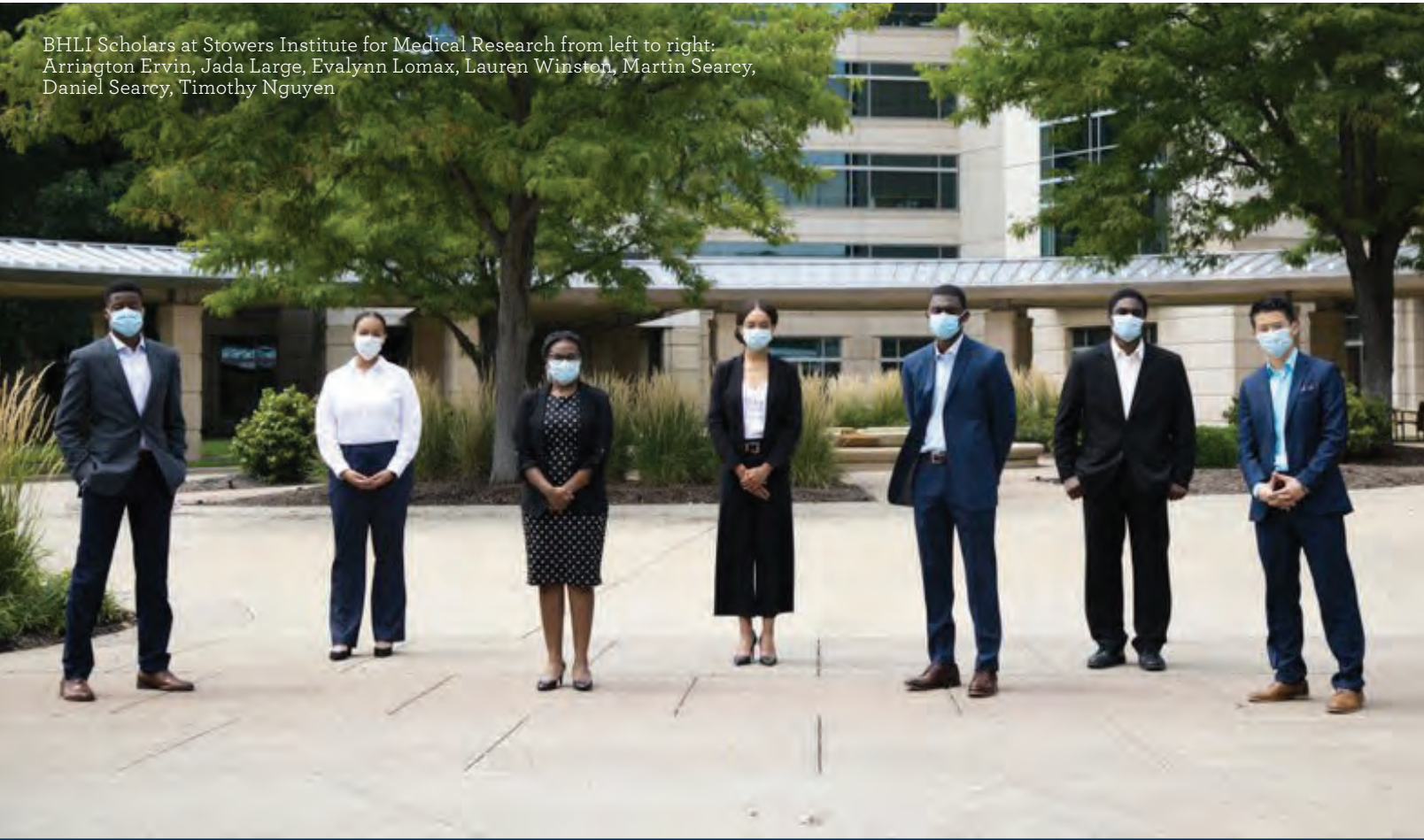
Donations needed include new bed linen (twin and full), blankets, pillows, towels, paper towels, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, diapers and disinfectant products.

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For more information call 816.483.9927 or to make a donation visit: <https://www.sheffieldplace.org/donate>
6604 East 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64126

BHLI Scholars at Stowers Institute for Medical Research from left to right: Arrington Ervin, Jada Large, Evalynn Lomax, Lauren Winston, Martin Searcy, Daniel Searcy, Timothy Nguyen



Humility, Resolve and Hope

Building a Pipeline of Culturally Competent Healthcare Leadership

In its July/August 2019 issue, *Our Health Matters* featured an article highlighting local Kansas Citian Jada Large, a student of the Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute (BHLI) who had just completed a 16-day leadership development program. The BHLI was founded to cultivate a pipeline of diverse, culturally competent talent for healthcare leadership who will serve to eliminate disparities in healthcare.

This summer things changed dramatically for BHLI students due to the pandemic. Large was scheduled to start an internship at Carilion Clinic in Roanoke, VA, where she would learn more about hospital leadership; however, due to COVID-19, she was unable to participate.

Fortunately, here at home, Stowers Institute for Medical Research, provided an exceptional week of

learning activities for Large and other local BHLI scholars. Stowers' executive leadership team, scientific leadership, and core scientists provided an in-depth look at the impactful research completed at Stowers. The BHLI scholars also researched and presented a case study regarding an organization's response to COVID-19.

Here is a summary of *Our Health Matters'* interview with Jada Large:

OHM: What was your main takeaway from the Stowers experience?

LARGE: My main takeaway was that a collaborative culture is crucial to an organization's success. Stowers is a premier example of how collaboration should extend

from the top down; in their case, it extends from the highest level of administration to the different teams of scientists working together. Collaboration allows Stowers to succeed organizationally, and it also facilitates a generation of knowledge that betters society.

OHM: What did you learn from the Stowers experience that surprised you, or that you did not expect to learn?

LARGE: I had no idea what type of medical research was conducted at Stowers prior to the experience. I did not expect to learn that their research is curiosity-driven rather than utility-driven. It is amazing that scientists may come to Stowers and pursue any idea or question they have, provided that it contributes to the discovery of foundational knowledge that will ultimately benefit humanity. Learning about Stowers' research philosophy changed how I thought about research.

OHM: What leadership principles did you learn from the Stowers experience?

LARGE: I learned that humility, resolve, and hope are characteristics that great leaders ought to have. To lead a successful and visionary organization, a leader has to first choose the right goals, then have a plan to reach them, and most importantly, get everyone focused on and committed to reaching the goals. Effective leaders do this by garnering consistent, high engagement from others.

OHM: Would you recommend that other students participate in the BHLI?

LARGE: I would highly recommend that students participate because it helps them develop the tools needed to one day become an executive, and provides a unique opportunity to network with top-level professionals. The BHLI offers a supportive network that extends throughout one's career. Scholars in the cohort become our friends and some of our biggest cheerleaders.

OHM: What effects did participating in the 2019 BHLI have on your recent academic year?

LARGE: Following the BHLI, I returned to Emory



Scholars present case study presentation

University for my junior year and held two different leadership positions: Co-President of one organization and Vice-President of another. I was able to apply what I learned about leadership to both of those roles. Many speakers during the BHLI stressed the importance of active listening and of making sure that others feel valued. Those are just two of the many leadership principles that I was able to practice as I fulfilled my responsibilities.

“HUMILITY, RESOLVE, AND HOPE ARE CHARACTERISTICS THAT GREAT LEADERS OUGHT TO HAVE.” –JADA LARGE, BHLI SCHOLAR

John W. Bluford, President of the BHLI, regarding the scholars' Stowers experience, said, “There were many lessons learned at the Stowers Institute regarding managerial agility relative to coronavirus concerns, various scientific processes, and research integrity. But a major takeaway for our scholars from my perspective was that they witnessed what a culture of quality looks and feels like.”

For more information regarding the BHLI, please view www.blufordinstitute.org



Better Sleep

BETTER HEALTH

Poor Sleep Impacts Health in Many Ways.

“Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.” – Benjamin Franklin

Do you cut corners when it comes to your sleep, thinking it won't be a problem? You may think that sleep is merely “downtime” when the brain shuts off and the body rests.

Think again. Your brain and body is still active even while you're asleep.

Sleep explained

Sleep is a complex biological process that helps you process new information, stay healthy, and feel rested.

During sleep, your brain cycles through four stages.

Stage 1 - changeover from wakefulness to sleep.

Stage 2 - a period of light sleep before you enter deeper sleep.

Stage 3 - the period of deep sleep that you need to feel refreshed in the morning.

Stage 4 - REM sleep first occurs about 90 minutes after falling asleep. Most dreaming occurs during REM sleep.

For healthy sleep, you need all four stages. Certain phases of sleep help you to:

- Feel rested and energetic the next day
- Learn information, get insight and form memories
- Give your heart and vascular system a rest
- Boost your immune system to help fight off illness

Quantity and quality of sleep matters

The amount of sleep you need depends on several factors: your age, lifestyle, health, and whether you have been getting enough sleep recently. The general recommendations for sleep by age group are:

- Newborns: 16-18 hours a day
- Preschool-aged children: 11-12 hours a day
- School-aged children: At least 10 hours a day
- Teens: 9-10 hours a day
- Adults (including older adults): 7-8 hours a day

And it's not just the number of hours of sleep you get that matters. The quality of the sleep you get is also important. If your sleep is frequently interrupted or cut short, you may not be getting enough of each stage of the total sleeping process.

How does sleep affect my health?

When you don't get enough sleep, it affects your physical and mental health. Depriving yourself of sleep can affect job or school performance, including your ability to think clearly, react quickly and form memories.

Sleep deprivation affects your mood and decision making, and can lead to:

- Irritability
- Problems with relationships, especially for children and teenagers
- Depression
- Anxiety

Research shows that not getting enough sleep, or getting poor-quality sleep, increases your risk of:

- High blood pressure

- Heart disease, stroke
- Kidney disease
- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes

How can I get better sleep?

Take steps to help improve your sleep habits. First, make sure that you allow yourself enough time to sleep.

Try these tips:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- Avoid nicotine and caffeine, especially in the afternoon and evening
- Avoid alcoholic drinks or large meals and beverages late at night
- Relax before bed, for example by taking a bath, reading or listening to relaxing music
- Get rid of distractions such as noises, bright lights, and a TV or computer in the bedroom. Also, don't be tempted to go on your phone or tablet just before bed.

Visit <http://sleepeducation.org/essentials-in-sleep/healthy-sleep-habits> to read more about healthy sleep and get more tips and information. If you continue to have problems sleeping, it may be time to talk to your doctor or health care provider.

Sleep disorders impact millions

Doctors and specialists can diagnose and treat these conditions. If you have trouble sleeping, you are not alone. Millions of Americans at any given time have trouble getting and staying asleep. According to the American Sleep Association, as many as 50 to 70 million U.S. adults suffer from a sleep disorder. The five most common sleep disorders and symptoms are:

- Insomnia – not being able to sleep when tired, feeling exhausted when waking, no amount of sleep is enough to feel well-rested.
- Sleep Apnea – heavy snoring and waking up gasping or choking.
- Narcolepsy – falling asleep anytime or anywhere.
- Restless Legs Syndrome – uncontrollable urge to move your legs while sleeping that can cause pain and a crawling sensation.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LINK BETWEEN SLEEP AND YOUR HEALTH FROM THESE RESOURCES:

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org>

<https://medlineplus.gov/sleepdisorders.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/sleep_hygiene.html

Our Health Matters does not recommend or endorse any treatments or medications.

If you have questions about your health, please consult your doctor or health care provider.

- REM Sleep Behavior Disorder – living out your dreams (kicking, shouting, talking, punching) that causes you to be a danger to yourself and others.

These disorders and the sleep deprivation they cause can interfere with work, driving, social activities, and overall quality of life, and can have serious health implications.

In addition to the health impact, the financial impact is staggering. Sleep disorders account for an estimated \$16 billion in medical costs each year, plus indirect costs

due to missed days of work, decreased productivity, and other factors.

Trouble sleeping can be an indication of a more serious condition, and some prescription and over-the-counter drugs can contribute to sleep problems. Be sure to discuss your sleep-related questions, concerns and symptoms with your doctor or health care provider. •

Sources: NIH/Sleep, Sleep Foundation, The American Sleep Association



Sleep Disturbances Should Not Be Ignored

Something Can Be Done About It

The energy of youth, the wonderful feeling of a good night's sleep, ready to tackle the world!

Where did that energy go? Is it just age or life beating us down? Is there anything we can do about it?

Sometimes during sleep, the tongue can drop back against the back of the throat, blocking the airway. This cutoff of oxygen affects the entire body, especially the brain. The result leads to interrupted sleep, snoring, insufficient rest, daytime tiredness and lack of energy. Sometimes, the interruption in breathing can last more than a few seconds or much longer. In extreme situations, we can live for about three weeks without food, three days without water, but only three minutes without oxygen.

We call the problem sleep apnea. It is common, serious and potentially responsible for many other health issues, including stroke and heart problems.

There is also the fact that snoring and sleep apnea disturbs the sleep of your partner and/or other members of the household.

Apnea comes from the Greek words pnea (= air or breathing) and (a= without).

How sleep apnea is diagnosed and treated

An evaluation called a home sleep study (a small device about the size of a cell phone) worn during the night measures sleep interruptions, snoring, oxygen levels and heart rate.

A sleep doctor evaluates the results and then recommends next steps. You may be required to use a machine or dental device to treat your sleep apnea.

A dental sleep appliance is often recommended as the first treatment choice, especially for mild and moderate cases. It's generally very compact and comfortable. And it's well-tolerated among most users.

The dental sleep appliance works on the simple principle that the tongue is joined to the lower jaw (the mandible) and if the lower jaw is guided to a small degree forward, the tongue follows and the airway is opened.

Dentists who have been trained in sleep disturbance and treatment can help get the home sleep study done and get the

results evaluated. If a dental sleep appliance is recommended, these dentists can have a custom-fitted appliance made for you.

More severe cases may require a device called the CPAP (Continuous Positive Air Pressure) machine. A CPAP machine is a pump that sends air through a mouthpiece through the mouth into the lungs under pressure.

Some of the issues regarding the CPAP include wearing a mask every night, cleaning the machine, and dry mouth due to continuously blowing air.



By Robert G. Marx, DDS
Marx Sleep Center



Dental, oral sleep appliance.

Abnormal snoring is not healthy

Snoring used to be considered annoying or even funny. It may be annoying, but it's definitely not funny. There are serious health risks associated with sleep apnea.

Take control of your health. If you feel you have some of the symptoms of sleep apnea, see a doctor for a complete evaluation and get started on the road to better health and better sleep. •

Robert Marx, DDS, helps patients with sleep apnea return to normal lives and better health without noisy and uncomfortable CPAP machines. For more information visit marxsleep.com.

Housing is a Basic Human Right

SAVE, Inc. was founded in 1986, providing a place for those with HIV / AIDS to die with dignity. Today, SAVE has evolved to serve additional populations while remaining true to the belief that housing is healthcare.

Housing First

SAVE believes in a housing-first solution. Without stable housing you cannot address your health or improve your life. SAVE provides housing stability, allowing clients the opportunity to overcome health diagnoses and move forward. SAVE, Inc. provides both permanent and transitional housing as well as case management.

Addressing Needs

SAVE, Inc. has always met unmet needs for KC's most vulnerable, most recently with the opening of PRIDE Haven, a drop-in shelter for youth aged 18-24, providing supportive services, meals and a safe, judgment-free space.

Who is Eligible?

To receive SAVE, Inc. services, clients must be homeless or nearly homeless with a physical or mental health diagnosis. Recipients must be referred through the community-wide Coordinated Entry System: a system that assesses vulnerability and identifies appropriate housing solutions. Recipients can access the system by calling 211.

How You Can Help

SAVE Inc. accepts monetary donations. For additional involvement and donation opportunities, visit saveinckc.org.



SAVE is excited to open their newest housing facility, Alhaven, in 2021. Alhaven will provide 50 additional units, nearly doubling SAVE, Inc.'s capacity to provide housing.

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Everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

PO Box 45301 • Kansas City, MO 64171
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Student-Athletes Need High Quality Sleep

Contributed by Children's Mercy Hospital

An overlooked recovery strategy that is vital in supporting both a student-athlete's health and sport performance, is sleep. Student-athletes should sleep between 9 and 11 hours per night to reach their peak athletic performance.

When it comes to training for sports, many student-athletes and their parents recognize the importance of eating well and consistent exercise, but sleep is often overlooked as a factor that can affect a child's performance and recovery. That's unfortunate because getting enough quality slumber is critical for an athlete's energy, coordination, muscle growth, recovery, repair, mental focus, ability to manage stress, and academic performance.

Contrary to common perception, sleep isn't a passive activity; it's an active state that leads to repair, recovery and regeneration for an athlete's body and mind.

How It Helps Their Game

Besides improving physical energy and mental stamina during practices and games, sleep can improve skills specific to various activities. For instance, sleeping more can increase shooting accuracy among basketball players, and the accuracy of serves among tennis players. By contrast, insufficient sleep or sleep deprivation (such as pulling an all-nighter) can impair a student-athlete's reaction time, lead to decreased exercise tolerance and a quicker onset of exhaustion while playing sports.

Enough sleep is especially important in young athletes for growth, development, recovering from injury and even helping

prevent future injuries. Research shows that teen athletes with a lack of sleep are at a higher risk of injury.

Ways to Get More Sleep

Given the demands of practice and competition schedules, as well as academic responsibilities, student-athletes are at a considerable risk of not getting enough sleep to meet the needs of their active bodies and minds. Making high-quality sleep a priority is a must.

Start by helping your athlete stick with a consistent sleep schedule (including bedtimes and awakening times) that allow for enough sleep.

Create a relaxing routine before bed to help your student-athlete manage stress and decompress. Don't allow the use of electronic devices shortly before bedtime, as it suppresses secretion of melatonin, which is not conducive for sleep.

If the opportunity allows, let your student-athlete nap (20 to 30 minutes) to supplement inadequate night-time sleep on an as-needed basis. Be careful though because napping longer can interfere with the much more important nighttime sleep.

If a student-athlete is consistently struggling with sleep where it could be because of a more serious condition such as insomnia, sleep apnea or a sleep-related movement disorder, he or she should see their primary care physician who may refer to a sleep specialist if needed.

Article reviewed by Greg Canty, MD Sports Medicine Physician, Sports Medicine Center at Children's Mercy, www.cmh.edu.



Getting an Autistic Child to Snooze

Growing up, I often awoke in the middle of the night to the sound of feet shuffling on the other side of my bedroom door. I heard cups and plates being moved, liquids being poured, and squeals from my brother. My brother has nonverbal autism. Autistic children and adults have higher rates of sleep disorders and disturbances. People with autism often struggle to filter out all the noise of the world around them, making sleep infrequent and fragmented.

Naturally, this impacts the parents' sleep cycle, too. I remember sensing the exhaustion in my parents. It was difficult for them to be fully invested in their work, activities and their other children's lives.

Tips to getting your child to sleep

There is no magic pill for getting an autistic child to sleep. Getting your autistic child to sleep will take repetition, perseverance and grit. Following are some helpful and proven tips.

Establish a Sleep Routine

It is important to establish a routine to make your child feel safe and allow for stronger emotional and behavioral development. These routines can range from a simple bath time regimen to something more elaborate such as reading them to sleep, giving a hug before lights out, or simply laying with them with the lights off until they fall asleep.

Create a Sleepy Environment

Take away screen time one hour before bedtime. One key unhealthy sleep habit to crush is screen time before bed. In a meta-analysis about screen media effects on sleep, researchers found that screen time within one hour before bed was associated with delayed sleep and poorer sleep quality. This may be difficult for children with autism, as tantrums may occur if you attempt to take away their screen time.

If this is the case, create a sleepy environment around the screen — turn off the light, turn on a humidifier, play sleepy music, or turn on a fan. If possible, limit screen time more and more each day to a point where your child is looking at a screen less than before.



By Sydney Walls
Contributor

Finally, Seek Help

If all else fails and your sleep cycle is hitting desperation, there are agencies that offer caregiver and nurse aides at night hours. KanCare, the Medicaid program for Kansas, offers caregiver/nurse hours for up to \$2,000/month. There is no shame in needing help and, thankfully, there are willing caregivers out there who are trained and able to take care of your child while you sleep.

A note to keep in mind when adjusting your child's sleep schedule, is that some autistic kids require different amounts of sleep. My brother, for example, functions with 4-5 hours of sleep each day. I have worked with and have met children and adults who function with less than 3 hours of sleep. This could be the most difficult sleep hurdle to overcome. If you sense that your child may require less sleep than you, establishing a routine for them to quietly play by themselves, continue to lay down, or for a caregiver to come in at the early hours to help your child will also help you sleep more. The main key to getting your autistic child to sleep is perseverance. Don't be afraid to seek help from your child's doctor. Also try new things to get your child to sleep; it will benefit you and your child in ways that are immeasurable. •

[Sydney Walls](#) is a Masters level journalist in health communications at the University of Kansas.

My Snoring Was Out of Control — It Also Threatened My Health

By **Jeanene Dunn**, OHM Staff

Anna* was waking up exhausted every day and she had no idea that her snoring was keeping her kids awake. They said she sounded like a choo-choo train and then proceeded to question whether her snoring that way was normal. It was not.

What she didn't know at the time was that her loud snoring was potentially life-threatening. After all, snoring is a common occurrence and most people wake up the next day rested and ready to start the day. Factors that can cause snoring include:

- Your mouth anatomy
- Sinus and/or allergies
- The common cold
- Your weight

Anna was going to bed early enough to get eight hours' sleep, but always felt tired.

"I would wake up in the morning and feel like I hadn't slept at all," she explains. Anna also battled daytime sleepiness and struggled to stay awake during the workday. She is now retired, but she had a demanding job that required her to be fully engaged in what she was doing. "I worked in the field and was always going from one location to another, and from one meeting to the next."

Anna was experiencing symptoms of the sleep disorder obstructive sleep apnea. Her snoring was caused by her airway being obstructed as she slept. She was struggling to breathe as she slept so her body was never at rest.

She was also making dangerous decisions behind the wheel. "I would literally try to take a cat nap at stoplights. I knew I couldn't keep that up." She promptly made an appointment to see her doctor who referred her for a sleep study.

She spent a night at a sleep clinic and about two weeks later, her doctor confirmed the obstructive sleep apnea diagnosis. "The report noted that I had stopped breathing 272 times," she says. "I was in shock. He also told me that my weight was a contributing factor to the sleep disorder."

Since her diagnosis 10 years ago, Anna uses a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine every night and also during naps. "I have to hook up to a machine every time I go to sleep," Anna says. The CPAP machine she uses provides a constant and steady flow of air pressure via a hose and mask.

Anna's story is not uncommon. Obstructive sleep apnea is one of the most commonly diagnosed sleep disorders. Pay attention to these symptoms and always talk to your doctor about your concerns:

- Witnessed breathing pauses during sleep
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Morning headaches
- Sore throat upon awakening
- Restless sleep
- Gasping and choking at night
- High blood pressure
- Chest pain at night

Anna is glad she is able to get a good night's sleep. "I feel so much better and I am working to lose the extra weight. I go walking every day and eat healthier," she reports. •

Sources: *Anna (not real name). [The Mayo Clinic](#) and [Columbia University Department of Neurology](#)





5 POSITIVES TO HIV CARE + TREATMENT

CHOICES

TREATMENT IS NEVER ONE-SIZE-FITS ALL. YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM CAN HELP YOU FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU.



SAFER SEX

STAYING ON TREATMENT REDUCES YOUR VIRAL LOAD. HAVING AN UNDETECTABLE VIRAL LOAD GREATLY REDUCES YOUR CHANCE OF TRANSMITTING THE VIRUS TO YOUR SEXUAL PARTNERS WHO ARE HIV-NEGATIVE.

BIRTHDAYS

STAYING IN CARE AND ON TREATMENT WILL HELP YOU LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE.



FAMILY

OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV WHO WANT TO BE PARENTS. TALK TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ABOUT YOUR PLANS FOR HAVING CHILDREN.

HOPE

DON'T LET HIV STAND IN YOUR WAY: KEEP DOING THE THINGS YOU LOVE AND NEVER STOP LIVING. IF THINGS GET TOUGH, SEEK SUPPORT FROM YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM AND LOVED ONES. KNOW THAT **HIV TREATMENT WORKS.**



HIV TREATMENT WORKS LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE

GET IN CARE

FIND THE RIGHT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS. THEY CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE AND HELP YOU STAY INFORMED ABOUT YOUR HIV CARE AND GET CONNECTED TO OTHER SERVICES.



STAY IN CARE

MAKE HIV CARE AND TREATMENT A PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE. GET TO APPOINTMENTS AND TAKE YOUR MEDICINES AS DIRECTED. IT WILL KEEP YOU HEALTHIER, LONGER.



LIVE WELL

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH. EXERCISE, EAT RIGHT, AND ASK FOR SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT.



HIV DOES NOT DEFINE YOU

TALK TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ABOUT ANY CHALLENGES YOU MAY HAVE. WORK TOGETHER TO MANAGE YOUR TREATMENT PLAN.



For free and confidential testing. Call 816-513-6132 for HIV/STD testing.
Need medical care? Call 816-990-2411



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WHAT'S NEXT DECEMBER 2020 EDITION Faith, Hope, Love and Togetherness

A worldwide pandemic touched every corner of the world. As of this printing 212,000 American lives lost; loved ones with Covid-19 died alone in hospitals because of visitor restrictions. Then there's voter suppression, an abnormally active hurricane season, west coast fires, nationwide protests against police brutality, domestic terrorism and violence across America, social distancing, mandated masks, job losses, closed schools, distance learning, business closings, shortages of personal protective equipment, toilet paper and hand sanitizer; a rush against time to create a vaccine for Covid-19, political division in the highest levels of government...on and on.

Our Health Matters also made a few adjustments. Like you we are hopeful, we are resilient. In the months ahead we will continue to bring vital health news and information to support you and your family's health. Our DECEMBER edition will close out with inspirational people and their message for a better tomorrow.

What we all need right now is FAITH, HOPE, LOVE and TOGETHERNESS.

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