



wellness & safety



Schools Insurance Authority

Volume XXVII, No. 5 • May – June 2017

Blood pressure by the numbers

Understanding the ups and downs of the ‘silent killer’ that is HBP

High blood pressure (HBP) occurs when the force of the blood flowing through your blood vessels is consistently too high. Known as the “silent killer,” HBP has no obvious symptoms to indicate that something is wrong. The only way to diagnose HBP is to have your blood pressure tested. Understanding what your blood pressure numbers mean is key to controlling HBP.

Blood pressure is recorded as two numbers. The systolic (upper number) indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting against your artery walls when the heart beats. The diastolic (lower number) indicates how much pressure your blood is exerting while the heart is resting between beats.

Uncontrolled HBP can be fatal. If you’ve been diagnosed with high blood pressure, take steps to help keep it under control.

- **Know your numbers.** Most people diagnosed with high blood pressure want to stay below 140/90 mm Hg, but your health care provider can tell you your personal target blood pressure.
- **Work with your doctor.** Your health care provider will help you make a plan to lower your blood pressure.
- **Make a few lifestyle changes.** In many cases this will be your doctor’s first recommendation, likely in one of these areas:
 - ◊ **Maintain a healthy weight.**
 - ◊ **Eat healthier.** Eat lots of fruit, veggies, low-fat dairy, and less saturated and total fat.
 - ◊ **Reduce sodium.** Stay under 1,500 mg a day, which is associated with the greatest reduction in blood pressure.
 - ◊ **Get active.** Shoot for 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity three to four times per week.
 - ◊ **Limit alcohol.** Drink no more than two drinks a day.



May is National High Blood Pressure Month

- ◊ **Check your blood pressure at home.** Take ownership of your treatment by tracking your blood pressure.
- ◊ **Take your medication.** If you have to take medication, take it exactly the way the doctor says.

Contact your doctor for advice and further guidance. Additional information can be found at www.heart.org.

Blood pressure category	Systolic mm Hg		Diastolic mm Hg
Normal	Less than 120	and	Less than 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure – Stage 1	140-159	or	90-99
High Blood Pressure – Stage 2	160 or higher	or	100 or higher
Hypertensive Crisis Emergency care needed	Higher than 180	or	Higher than 110

Source: American Heart Association

Yoga holds a key to better sleep and a sharper, healthier you

By Lyn Poll, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

Sleep deficiency may not be a top news headliner, but that doesn't mean that insufficient sleep and/or excessive fatigue don't play a role in our daily lives.

With ever-increasing demands on our time, research shows that the costs of sleep loss in terms of job performance, personal safety and compromised health are higher than most people realize.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that some 100,000 police-reported car crashes each year are the direct result of driver fatigue. This statistic translates to nearly 1,600 deaths, more than 70,000 injuries and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses. And these figures are believed to be conservative, as pinpointing the causes of crashes solely as a result of sleepiness or fatigue is difficult. Unlike with intoxication, there's no test to measure sleepiness behind the wheel. In fact, some researchers believe that sleep deprivation can impair drivers as much as driving under the influence.

A 2013 study by the National Institutes of Health estimates that 50 million to 70 million U.S. adults have some form of sleep disorder, with more than 20 million afflicted with sleep apnea, a condition associated with increased cardiovascular risk.

Currently, a third of all adults report being sleepy during daylight hours. The monetary tally in lost productivity due to sleep deprivation is estimated at \$50 billion annually. And sleep deficiency is not only costly in terms of dollars and cents, it's also been the cause of catastrophic human error: nuclear reactor meltdowns, large ship groundings, aviation accidents,

(Continued on page 3)



8-minute relaxation routine

Upside-down relaxation

Minutes: 0:00-2:00

Sit facing a wall (or your headboard) with your butt about six inches away from it.

Lie back and extend your legs up the wall.

If this is too intense a stretch for your hamstrings, slide your butt farther away from the wall.

If it's not enough, scoot closer.

Let your arms rest by your sides, palms facing up, and breathe gently, feeling the stretch in the backs of your legs.

Winding Down Twist

Minute: 2:00-3:00

Sit cross-legged on the bed and exhale as you place your right hand on your left knee and left hand on the bed behind your tailbone.

Gently twist your torso to the left.

Allow your gaze to follow, looking over your left shoulder. Breathe deeply, then return to center and repeat on opposite side.

Nighttime Goddess Stretch

Minutes: 3:00-5:00

Lie on your back with knees bent.

Place the soles of your feet together, then let your knees fall open, forming a diamond shape with your legs.

Rest your arms on the bed.

If you feel any strain, elevate your legs by placing a pillow underneath each knee.

Child's Pose

Minutes: 5:00-7:00

Sit up comfortably on your heels.

Roll your torso forward, bringing your forehead to rest on the bed in front of you.

Lower your chest as close to your knees as you comfortably can, extending your arms in front of you.

Hold the pose and breathe.

Rock-a-Bye Roll

Minute: 7:00-8:00

Lying on your back, hug your knees into your chest.

Cross your ankles and wrap both arms around your shins with clasped hands.

Inhale and rock your body up to sit; exhale as you roll back.

Continue for one minute, then roll back, extend arms and legs, and drift off to sleep.



Yoga (Continued from page 2)

medical errors responsible for injury and death, and more.

So how can we change our sleep habits? One approach may be to focus on the quality of sleep over the actual quantity of sleep with a pre-sleep routine. Yoga, for example, has proven to be an effective way to increase the quality of restorative sleep through its simple and study-proven way of preparing the mind and body for rest. Yoga has been associated with deeper sleep, diminished fatigue, less fall-asleep time and improved overall wellness.

Below is a link to an effective pre-sleep yoga routine that can move you from counting sheep to never wanting to leave the sheets. And all the exercises can be done in your PJs, right in your bed. The yoga routine is described on the previous page and you can view a short 8-minute video of this routine online at: www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/yoga/poses/yoga-routine-before-sleep.

We develop routines for all other aspects of our lives, including work, school, kids, social events, relaxation and even doctor visits, so why not take a few minutes to develop a sleep routine? To paraphrase the popular EnVogue song, "Free your mind and the rest will follow."

Resources:

www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/yoga/poses/yoga-routine-before-sleep;
NIH, 2013 Sleep Disorders & Insufficient Sleep: Improving Health Through Research; <http://drowsydriving.org/about/facts-and-stats>

Don't let eyestrain at the computer cloud your day

Eyestrain is a common complaint when working with a computer. Eye soreness, blurred vision and dry itching or burning eyes are common symptoms. Fortunately, there are ways to adapt the work environment to make it less demanding on your eyes:



Eye Ease Tips

- **To reduce glare, position your screen** so that neither you nor the screen faces a window.
- **To lessen strain on eye muscles, keep your screen 18 to 28 inches from your eyes**, and no higher than eye level when you're seated in your chair. If you use a document holder, keep it at the same height as your screen.
- **Use dimmer lighting around your screen, if possible.** Dim lighting reduces glare and makes the screen easier to read. Select lighting that doesn't reflect off the screen or other surfaces, and direct it so that it doesn't shine in your eyes.
- **Adjust the screen's brightness and contrast controls** for your best comfort.
- **If you experience chronic eye problems**, have your eyes examined by an eye care professional.

Take A Rest

- **One of the best things you can do for your eyes when working on a computer** or in other eye-straining situations is to take short breaks.
- **Simple one-minute eye exercises done every 20 minutes** can reduce eye fatigue.
- **Change eye focus by glancing across the room or looking out the window** at objects at least 20 feet away.
- **Lightly cup your eyes with your palms** and relax for 60 seconds.
- **Look away from the screen and roll your eyes up and down, around and side to side.**



- End the school year accident-free
- Get to know your WeTip neighbors

Wrap up the school year on a high – and safe – note

As you prepare to clean and close your classroom for the summer, take care to keep yourself safe. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Take a moment to get a ladder or stepladder.** Don't use chairs, desks, shelves, crates or other items as makeshift ladders.
- **Don't stack heavy boxes or other materials** on high shelves.
- **Don't leave high-value items in classrooms.**
- **Be aware of your surroundings** and stay focused on your routes of travel.
- **Ask for assistance with lifting or moving heavy items,** or use a hand truck.
- **Use this proper lifting technique:**
 - ◇ First, look at the load and size it up.
 - ◇ Bend your knees and squat as close to the load as possible.
 - ◇ Get a good grip and tighten your stomach muscles.
 - ◇ Lift the load using your thigh muscles, not your back; keep your back straight.
 - ◇ Hold the load close to your body while you carry it.

Hold on to those permission forms

Although the school year is coming to a close, don't throw away all those permission forms you collected during the school year. All permission and activity forms should be kept for at least one year after the conclusion of the current school year. Don't get caught without the right documentation!

WeTip in the summer

WeTip is a tool you can use this summer to reduce vandalism at your schools. Reach out to your campus neighbors and ask them to keep an eye out for unusual activity. Encourage them to call local authorities and use WeTip to share information anonymously.

To help promote the WeTip program at your school or work site, you can request posters, wallet cards, magnets and more. For more information, contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org or 916-364-1281, ext. 1256.



The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.