



wellness & safety

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7 weird signs you may not be getting enough sleep

May is Better Sleep Month

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Are you among the one in four Americans who don't get the recommended seven hours of sleep per night? Turns out many of us could use a little more shut-eye. Signs such as endless yawns, heavy eyes and the need for an extra cup of java in the morning are usually the telltale signs of sleep deprivation. But there are other, less familiar, signals that may be telling you to get more sleep.

Problems arise when you go from just a few restless nights to chronic nights of sleep deprivation. When sleep debt accumulates over weeks, you tend not to realize how tired you really are, says Dr. Joseph Ojile, M.D., the medical director at the Clayton Sleep Institute. "With fatigue and sleeplessness, we are by nature impaired," he says. "So that also means our self-awareness and judgment is off." Luckily there are some subtle (and slightly bizarre) signs that reveal when we're truly sleep-deprived.

1. You rely on clichés.

Do you find yourself peppering platitudes ("What goes around comes around" or "It is what it is") into everyday conversation? No, you haven't switched bodies with a robot; you might just be sleepy. Studies have shown that, in the extreme, sleep deprivation can mimic the levels of impairment brought on by too much alcohol, Ojile says. "When you're impaired, you rely on crutches, the things you know," he says. "That could mean clichés or anything that's rote and will allow you to stay in a conversation without expending much energy."

And it's not just the clichés. Excessively sleep-deprived people can sound drunk, with slurred speech, trouble finding words, and overt giddiness, says Terry Cralle, of the national Better Sleep Council.

2. You're unusually moody.

You're usually a pretty patient person, but now you have the shortest fuse. Little things, like people being late or missing deadlines, rile you up, and that's totally normal for someone



who is sleep-deprived, says Robert Rosenberg, M.D., a sleep medicine specialist and author of *Sleep Soundly Every Night, Feel Fantastic Every Day*. One study even showed that people who were low on sleep struggled to accurately read facial expressions; they started seeing non-threatening people as threatening. As you can imagine, thinking the world is out to get them can send most people into an emotional tailspin.

3. You get sick all the time.

You just got over one illness, and the next thing you know, another cold has you down for the count. Your body isn't railing against you (even if you ate a few too many helpings of chili cheese fries last weekend), but your immune system is weaker and struggling to fend off the germs you come into contact with every day. Case in point: One recent study found that people who slept less than five hours per night were four times more likely to catch the common cold than those who slept for six.

4. You have a serious case of the munchies.

Find yourself digging into a pint of ice cream right after you polished off some late-night pizza? Your hunger just can't be sated—and there's a perfectly good explanation for that. Studies have found that short sleeps lead to a lowered level of leptin (the hormone that decreases your appetite) and an increased level of ghrelin (the hunger hormone). Talk about a bad combination! Even worse, another study found

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- Biking to work also can be fun

May is Better Sleep Month (continued from page 1)

that participants who slept four and a half hours for four consecutive nights showed increased insulin sensitivity and an elevated risk for diabetes—even though they didn’t change their diets.

5. You can’t seem to make a decision.

Some choices are always hard to make (Netflix or Hulu?), and then there are days when every decision seems like it’s do or die. If you’re low on sleep, you’ll have less blood flow to the pre-frontal cortex, the area of your brain responsible for critical thinking. At the same time, there’s hyperactivity in the amygdala, which is wired for our responses to fear. “This leads to all sorts of problems with executive function,” Rosenberg says. “That includes things like decision-making, planning, organizing and paying attention.”

6. You lose your libido.

Fatigue can be an important factor when it comes to why women aren’t in the mood for sex. In particular, women involved with caring for children and aging parents frequently report being too exhausted for intimacy at the end of the day, according to the Mayo Clinic. And untreated sleep apnea—a sleep disorder that disrupts breathing and is estimated to afflict more than 18 million Americans—also has been linked to loss of libido in women. If you suspect your waning sex drive—or any other symptom of persistent fatigue—may be related to a serious health condition, such as sleep apnea or insomnia, it’s important to seek treatment for the underlying problem.

“Who wants to be intimate when they’re sleep-deprived?” Ojile says. And he’s got a point. For those of us who are low on sleep, the only thing we want to do when we crawl into bed is, well, sleep! Our sex drives seem nonexistent. For men, studies have found that sleep deprivation can lower levels of testosterone, which also lowers their interest in being intimate with their partners.



7. You’re breaking out like crazy.

If you wake up in the morning with acne clustered around your chin, don’t think your high school years have come back to haunt you. It’s a perfectly normal reaction to being sleep-deprived or overly stressed, says Jennifer Reichel, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist and advisor to RealSelf. Poor sleep habits can start to make skin less firm and hydrated—in a word: older. We have cortisol to thank for that. The hormone spikes in people who are stressed and sleep-deprived, and it can break down skin collagen, which stops it from being its usual smooth self.

Sleep is hugely important to your body. Sure, we all love that well-rested and alert feeling, but there’s plenty of stuff happening behind the scenes, too, from repairing damaged skin cells to flushing out toxins that build up in your brain. If you notice one of the aforementioned signs, it’s time to start thinking about your quantity and quality of sleep. Luckily, most of the time, these issues are reversible with a concerted effort to catch more zzz’s.

Make biking a part of your commute – and have fun doing it

If you’ve considered riding your bike to work but have concerns and find reasons not to try it, revisit the idea with the following in mind:



“I’m out of shape”:

- **Ride at an easy pace;** in a few months you’ll be in great shape.
- **Ride your route** on a weekend to find the easiest way to work.
- **You will improve your fitness level** when you become a regular bike commuter.

“It’s too far”:

- **Try riding to work** and taking mass transit home, then alternating the next day.
- **Combine riding and mass transit** to shorten your commute.
- **Ride to a coworker’s house** and car-pool to work.

“No showers”:

- **Most commuters don’t shower at work;** ride at an easy pace to stay cool and dry.
- **Ride home at a fast pace** if you want to work out; shower when you get there.
- **Health clubs offer showers;** ask for a discounted membership for showers only.

“I have to run errands”:

- **Bolt a rack to the back of your bike** to add carrying capacity.
- **Make sure you have a lock to secure your bike** while you’re in a building.

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The debate over e-cigarette safety goes on

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

Marketed as a “safe” alternative to conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes have soared in popularity among teens and young adults. According to the Surgeon General, more than a quarter of students in grades 6 through 12 and more than one-third of young adults have tried e-cigarettes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently noted that more than 2 million middle school and high school students in the United States had reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.

So, are electronic cigarettes really risk-free? Not according to a recent study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Researchers at the New York University School of Medicine reported that mice exposed to electronic cigarette vapor experienced DNA damage to the lungs, bladder and heart, increasing the risk of cancer and heart disease. Such damage was also found in human lung and bladder cells that had been exposed to e-cigarette vapor for the equivalent of 10 years.

In another study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, researchers analyzed urine samples from 103 participants with an average age of 16 and found elevated levels of five different toxins in the bodies of teens who use e-cigarettes. The toxins, acrolein, acrylamide, acrylonitrile, croton aldehyde and propylene oxide, are all known or suspected



carcinogens. These toxins belong to a class of chemicals known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and are released when e-cigarette liquid is heated to the point it becomes a vapor.

Critics claim these studies are false alarms that may deter conventional cigarette smokers from switching to vaping as a means of quitting. In fact, there has been little conclusive evidence that replacing conventional cigarettes with e-cigarettes leads to smoking cessation, but some studies also have shown that they are preferred alternatives to traditional cigarettes. The same critics challenge studies that indicate that teens who use e-cigarettes are more likely to become traditional cigarette users.

The jury is still out on both counts, but there’s good reason to be concerned about the potentially toxic chemicals found in these products. E-cigarettes and other vaping devices used at any age may compromise long-term health.

Regardless, the safest approach to this debate is smoking cessation, and for teens the best approach is smoking prevention. The conversation of “more safe” in terms of harm reduction is making many forget about the importance of smoking prevention and smoking cessation.

<http://cancer.ucsf.edu/news/2018/03/05/e-cigarette-use-exposes-teens-to-toxic-chemicals.8830>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320778.php>

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2018/03/01/peds.2017-3557>

Make biking a part of your commute routine (continued from page 2)

“The roads aren’t safe”:

- Obey traffic signs, ride on the right, signal turns and stop at lights.
- Wear bright clothing.
- Wear a helmet every time you ride.

“My bike is beat up”:

- Tell a reputable bike shop that you’re commuting and have them tune up your bike.

For more information on bike education and safety, visit www.bikeleague.org.

Source: *The League of American Bicyclists*





- WeTip is a valuable campus tool
- SIA's new incident-reporting app

WeTip is especially valuable in the summer

WeTip is a tool you can use this summer to reduce school vandalism. With WeTip information in hand, you can reach out to campus neighbors and ask them to keep an eye out for unusual activity. All WeTip program materials have handy and valuable contact information, so neighbors can easily call local authorities to report anything out of the ordinary and share information anonymously.

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



Sign up for WeTip

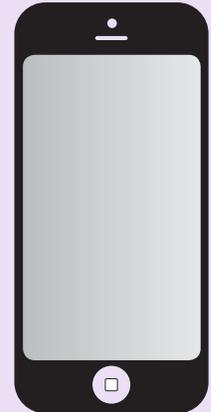
For information and materials, contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org.

Now your school can step up and STOPit!

So often after a tragedy we hear about those who “knew something might happen” but didn’t share their knowledge with anyone. Now, SIA is making available a tool that can give staff and students a way to report potential or in-progress campus incidents. It’s called STOPit!

STOPit! is a technology platform to enable students and staff to take quick action before incidents escalate or when help is otherwise needed. The mobile application empowers students with an easy, safe and anonymous way to submit photos, video and text in seconds. Designated school staff who receive the information can then ask for clarification and respond accordingly.

For additional information on starting this program in your school, contact Rick Jenkins at rjenkins@sia-jpa.org.



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.

