

# Sleep HealthCenters® Newsletter

David P.White, MD, Editor

April 2006

Dear Colleague,

In this issue of the Sleep HealthCenters® Newsletter, we present Sleep Habits: As Important as Diet and Exercise – Only Easier! Dr. Kelly Carden addresses poor habits that might inhibit a night of meaningful sleep and shares how to implement healthy sleep habits such as nighttime rituals, sleep environment hints, exercise and even food and drink that can initiate a quality night of rest.

In the CEO Corner, we are excited to announce our first site in the Worcester area at Chadwick Medical Associates, opening May 1st. We are also pleased to introduce new staff members including the Medical Director of our Beverly site, Douglas B. Kirsch, MD and our new physician liaison, Federico D'Amore. We anxiously share our National Sleep Awareness Week® activities that helped educate the public about sleep hygiene and hints for managing sleep problems in relation to diet and exercise.

If you have any questions about sleep disorders, our services or our new Worcester location, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

David P.White, MD  
Corporate Medical Director  
Sleep HealthCenters® LLC



  
**Sleep HealthCenters®**  
Better Sleep. Better Health.

**1-877-SLEEPHC**  
**1-877-753-3742**

## Sleep Habits: As Important as Diet and Exercise – Only Easier!

By Kelly A. Carden, MD

Dr. Carden is the Medical Director of the Sleep HealthCenter® affiliated with Hallmark Health. She is board certified in Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Disease, Critical Care Medicine and Sleep Medicine. She is a Clinical Instructor in Medicine at Harvard Medical School where she completed her Sleep Medicine Fellowship. Dr. Carden is also a Clinical Researcher at the Brigham and Women's Hospital.



Few things are more frustrating for your patients than not being able to sleep. Their mind is racing and they cannot shut it off. They toss and turn. Even if they get some sleep, they know it is not going to be enough. As a result, they feel tired and have difficulty getting through the day.

Just about everyone has experienced difficulty falling asleep or difficulty returning to sleep at some point in their lives. For most people it is a transient problem. You may see patients who are having difficulty sleeping after a death in the family, a job loss, a divorce or other traumatic event. More commonly however, patients present with a more longstanding problem. This change from a transient to a long-term problem can often be propagated by the development of habits that promote poor sleep. Patients try to compensate for their problem, but in doing so worsen it. These compensation efforts often include spending increasing amounts of time in bed to try to get more sleep, napping, using the television or radio in bed as a distraction and consuming more caffeine to promote wakefulness during the day. You can help your patients avoid developing long-term sleep problems by educating them about good sleep habits. Although it is a funny phrase, sleep medicine practitioners call these recommendations "Sleep Hygiene." It is a guide to "clean up" one's habits and promote quality sleep. In some patients who have developed longstanding insomnia, improving sleep hygiene may be sufficient to resolve their problems.

It has been shown that insomniacs have poorer sleep hygiene than "good sleepers." Sleep hygiene education alone is effective in some patients but may need to be combined with other behavioral methods. Multimodal behavioral strategies include stimulus control, sleep restriction, relaxation therapy and cognitive therapy. Nonpharmacological therapies for insomnia produce reliable and durable changes in several sleep parameters. Comparative trials have shown behavioral methods to be as effective as medications and maintain the positive changes longer. Sleep hygiene education has been shown to improve sleep in a variety of medical conditions including dementia, cancer, fibromyalgia, migraines and in a wide range of age groups.

By helping your patients clean up their sleep habits, you can prevent the perpetuation of poor quality sleep and possibly avoid the need for further intervention. Optimization of these habits is especially important for patients having sleeping problems, but are recommended for all of your patients. Listed below are the standard sleep hygiene recommendations along with the explanations you can give your patients on why they are important and how they work.

**Go to bed only when sleepy.** If your body is not ready for sleep, you cannot force it to sleep. Many people are on the go all day, including right up until bedtime, and think they can just jump into bed and fall asleep. Going to bed when sleepy will reduce the time you are awake in bed and reduce the frustration.

**Develop sleep rituals.** Develop a ritual to let your body know to prepare for bed. Include things that you enjoy and that relax you. Listen to relaxing music, read a book or short story for 15 minutes, or have a cup of caffeine- (continued on page 2)

  
Sleep HealthCenters®  
Better Sleep. Better Health.  
1400 Centre Street, Suite 109  
Newton, MA 02459

  
**Sleep HealthCenters®**  
Better Sleep. Better Health.

## In this issue of the Sleep HealthCenters® Newsletter...

- ▶ Sleep Habits: As important as diet and exercise, only easier!
- ▶ CEO Corner:
  - Sleep HealthCenters® announces first site in the Worcester area at Chadwick Medical Associates, opening May 1, 2006
  - Sleep HealthCenters® welcomes new staff: Douglas B. Kirsch, MD, and Federico D'Amore, Physician Liaison
  - Sleep HealthCenters® celebrates National Sleep Awareness Week® (March 27-April 2) with three public education events
- ▶ Research Activities

Sleep HealthCenters® is a network of sleep medicine centers staffed by experts in the field of sleep medicine. Our integrated care system provides all the services needed to diagnose and treat patients with the entire array of sleep disorders including obstructive sleep apnea, insomnia, narcolepsy and restless legs syndrome. Sleep HealthCenters® has locations throughout eastern Massachusetts and is affiliated with the Brigham and Women's Hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Faulkner Hospital, Hallmark Health, McLean Hospital and Chadwick Medical Associates.

Sleep HealthCenters® locations include Bedford, Beverly, Boston, Jamaica Plain, Malden, Newton, Weymouth and Worcester.

For more information, please contact us at: 1-877-SLEEPHC (1-877-753-3742) or visit our website at [www.sleephealth.com](http://www.sleephealth.com).

Referral forms are available on our website.

Sleep HealthCenters®

[www.sleephealth.com](http://www.sleephealth.com)

Phone: 1-877-753-3742

Fax: 781-271-0601

# Sleep HealthCenters® Newsletter

(continued from page 1) free tea. Relaxation techniques such as stretching, yoga and deep breathing may also help relieve anxiety, reduce muscle tension and allow you to fall asleep easier.

**If you can't fall asleep to the point of becoming frustrated, get up and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy.** Go back to your nightly ritual to give your body a cue to wind down. Do not expose yourself to bright light while you are up. Do not perform activities that wake you up more. Avoid work-related activities, cooking, cleaning, use of the computer or television.

**Don't take your worries and responsibilities to bed.** If you are worried about something or making "to do" lists in your head as you try to sleep, you may have trouble falling asleep. Try to leave your worries behind when you go to bed. Find time before bed to think about these issues and make your lists.

**Take a hot bath 1½-2 hours before bedtime.** There is some evidence that this may help some people. Give it a try – it might help!

**Have a light snack before bed.** If your stomach is empty and growling, it can interfere with sleep. Eat a light meal, as a heavy meal can interfere with sleep. Make sure the snack does not contain chocolate as it has stimulant properties and may interfere with sleep. Your mother was right about that warm glass of milk! Warm milk and foods high in the amino acid tryptophan, such as bananas and turkey, may help you to sleep.

**Stay away from caffeine, nicotine and alcohol at least 4-6 hours before bed.** Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that interfere with your ability to fall asleep, and stay asleep. Coffee, tea, soft drinks, hot cocoa, chocolate and some over-the-counter medicines contain caffeine. Cigarettes, cigars and some drugs contain nicotine. Although alcohol may help you fall asleep, it significantly interferes with the quality of your sleep and often makes you wake up more in the second half of the night.

**Get up and go to bed the same time every day.** The human body likes regularity in most everything, including sleep. Keeping yourself on a regular schedule (even on the weekends) will keep your sleep in a natural rhythm.

**Don't take naps.** If you nap throughout the day, is it any wonder you have trouble sleeping at night? The avoidance of naps keeps your body in rhythm and ensures you are appropriately sleepy at bedtime. It is normal to feel sleepy in the late afternoon but most people can avoid falling asleep. If you feel that you absolutely cannot make it through the day without a nap, make sure that it is at least 6 hours before bedtime and lasts less than 45 minutes. If you are having trouble sleeping at night, eliminate naps completely.

## Research Activities

Sleep HealthCenters® is proud to work with some of the premier sleep researchers in the country. The following research studies are currently underway in conjunction with our partners:

**Apnea Positive Pressure Long-Term Efficacy Study (APPLES).** The Sleep HealthCenter® affiliated with Brigham and Women's Hospital is conducting a NIH-funded study that examines the long-term effects on quality of life, neurocognitive function, sleepiness and mood by using Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) to treat sleep apnea.

**Refrain from exercise at least 2 hours before bedtime.** Regular exercise is recommended for your overall health, but can also help you sleep better. The time you exercise is important though! Exercising in the morning or early afternoon will not interfere with sleep. Exercising late in the evening can make it more difficult to fall asleep.

**Only use your bed for the three "S" activities.** The bed should be for sleep, sickness and .....intimacy only. It is best to leave all other activities for elsewhere! Refrain from using your bed for watching TV, paying bills, eating, doing paperwork, computer work or prolonged reading. Let your body "know" what the bed is for!

**Optimize your sleep environment.** Make sure your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable. If you live in a noisy area, earplugs, heavy curtains or a white noise machine might help. If you are sensitive to morning light, make sure your curtains block light in the morning or try wearing an eye covering. The temperature of your room is important as well. A hot room can be uncomfortable and interfere with sleep. A cool (not cold) room with appropriately warm bed covers is recommended. An uncomfortable mattress or bedding can also interfere with sleep. Evaluate your sleep environment and make sure it is the best it can be.

**Do not watch the clock.** Many people who are having difficulty sleeping check the clock to see how long it is taking to fall asleep, how long they have been asleep, or how much longer they have left to sleep. This can be a source of frustration and should be avoided.

**Use sunlight to set your biological clock.** When you get up in the morning, get exposure to bright light, preferably sunlight. Light signals that it is morning and you should wake up. Getting 15 minutes of sunlight exposure in the morning can make your entire day better and brighter!

Sleep is not an option! A large number of your patients do not get enough quality sleep and have poor habits regarding their sleep. Their health, happiness, productivity and even safety depend on how well they meet their body's need for rest and quality sleep. In the same way that you recommend diet and exercise, consider encouraging cleaning up their sleep habits. They will thank you for it!

**For a fully referenced version of this article, visit the Sleep HealthCenters® website: [www.sleephealth.com](http://www.sleephealth.com).**

**A printable PDF version of these sleep hygiene recommendations is available on our website ([www.sleephealth.com](http://www.sleephealth.com)), if you would like to make copies for your patients.**

**Restless Legs Syndrome.** The Sleep HealthCenter® affiliated with Brigham and Women's Hospital is conducting a research study that tests a new drug (in the form of a patch) for Restless Legs Syndrome (achy, creepy-crawly sensations in the legs, which get worse at night).

**Positive Airway Pressure Device.** As part of the Sleep HealthCenters® commitment to long term success of therapies to treat sleep disorders, we are currently investigating a standardized clinical program to help patients adjust to their initial experience with CPAP therapy to treat obstructive sleep apnea.

## Sleep Habits: A Case Study

Ms. R presents with a six month history of insomnia. The problem began after the finalization of a difficult divorce. She had "absolutely no problems" with her sleep prior to the divorce. The problem began as difficulty falling asleep but worsened to include difficulty maintaining sleep as well. Her bed time and wake time have become quite variable because she is "just not sleepy at the right time." She reports that she is "lucky to fall asleep before 1:00 AM" whereas one year ago her bedtime was consistently 11:00 PM. If she cannot fall asleep until 3:00 AM, she sleeps in until 10:00 AM. She is getting to work late at least 2 days per week, threatening her employment. She compensates for the loss of sleep with increased use of caffeine in the daytime and daily naps. She has as many as four awakenings at night and is very frustrated when she cannot sleep. She hates to be awake and "unproductive," therefore if she is awake, she cleans the house, pays bills and exercises. She has also begun to eat ice cream during her first awakening as she thinks it helps her return to sleep quickly. She has been using melatonin and other over-the-counter preparations,

but they have not helped. She reports that a glass of wine helps her fall asleep but then she wakes more frequently. She is concerned that she is using alcohol inappropriately thus she presents asking for a prescription for "some of those sleep medicines you see on television".

Ms. R has actually perpetuated the insomnia sparked by the stress and anxiety of her divorce. Because she was sleeping poorly, she changed her bedtime routine, got out of a regular schedule, began napping, did stimulating things at night when she couldn't sleep and tried to use a sedative for sleep (alcohol) and a stimulant (caffeine) to wake her up. All these things actually promote poor sleep. She was diagnosed with "Inadequate Sleep Hygiene" according to the criteria outlined in The International Classification of Sleep Disorders. The patient was educated about improving her sleep hygiene and each of the interfering behaviors was addressed. Within one week she was back to her previous sleep pattern and quality.



### CEO Corner

Paul S. Valentine  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Sleep HealthCenters® continues to expand and care for patients across Massachusetts. We are excited to announce our newest site at Chadwick Medical Associates in Worcester. Opening May 1st, this facility enables both physicians and patients in the Worcester market to gain easier access to our services. Our new site at 385 Grove Street will offer clinic services and a four bed sleep lab to accommodate patients. We look forward to working with Chadwick team players Dr. Robert Maloney, Medical Director and Peg LeRoux, Business Manager.

As demand for our services grows, we are grateful to welcome aboard new staff members. Douglas B. Kirsch, MD, is the new Medical Director of our Beverly Sleep HealthCenter® and is board certified in both Neurology and Sleep Medicine. He most recently practiced at the University of Michigan where he completed his sleep medicine fellowship and taught as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Kirsch will be conducting clinic in our Beverly, Malden and Newton locations.

In order to continue Sleep HealthCenters® effort to develop, grow and maintain strong physician relationships, we are pleased to introduce our new Physician Liaison, Frederico D'Amore. Mr. D'Amore brings over eight years of experience in the Massachusetts healthcare industry. He will be circulating throughout North Shore physician practices to answer any questions and field any concerns you may have regarding referrals or any other service-related issues.

Finally, we recently joined Brigham and Women's Hospital, Faulkner Hospital and the Bedford Curves for Women in celebrating National Sleep Awareness Week® (March 27-April 2), which coincided with the switch to Daylight Saving Time. Our experienced nurse practitioner, Margaret Trussler, spoke at three free events to help educate the public on this year's theme of "Sleep: As important as diet and exercise – only easier!" We had a wonderful turnout and are grateful for Margaret's devotion and expertise in informing all attendees about sleep strategies, sleep disorder warning signs, sleep as a crucial component to any weight loss plan and steps to take when an individual suspects a sleep problem.

Thank you for allowing us to play a role in the care of your patients. Please contact us if there is anything we can do for you.

**Potential to Detect Sleep Apnea from a Standard Heart Monitor.** Sleep HealthCenters® is working with a biotechnology company to develop and test a computer algorithm that can detect obstructive sleep apnea from a standard heart monitor at the hospital bedside.

**Operation Healthy Sleep.** This innovative research project is funded by the National Institute of Justice and is designed to examine and evaluate the impact of sleep disorders and treatment of sleep disorders on the safety, health and performance of Massachusetts State Police.

**Sleep and Menopause.** This unique study concentrates on understanding the role that hot flashes and sleep disruption play in the effect of estrogen replacement therapy on mood in perimenopausal and postmenopausal women.

