

HEALTH NEWS AND FEATURES

Sleep as part of a Healthy Lifestyle

by Carolyn Guilford, CNC

Sleep is absolutely one of the most essential habits of good health. You really can't be in the best possible health unless you are sleeping well, and getting enough sleep. We all have too much to do, but taking time to recharge ourselves by getting a good night's sleep can make all the difference in how productive we are the next day, and in preserving our health long-term.

Sleeping five hours or less each night has been shown over time to increase ones risk of developing diabetes, according to the journal: Diabetes Care. However recent research at Columbia University's Dept of Health Sciences shows that Long-term sleep deprivation increases the risk of a variety of major illnesses including, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Cancer, Heart Disease, Stroke, Depression, and Obesity.

On the good side, getting adequate sleep boosts the immune system and fights the ageing process with hormones we can only benefit from if we are asleep by 10 PM, and to optimize adrenal function.



Carolyn Guilford

Here are ten tips to help you get the sleep you need and deserve:

Maintain a regular bedtime and wake time schedule, including weekends.

Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine such as soaking in a hot bath or hot tub and then reading a book or listening to soothing music.

Create an environment that is dark, quiet, comfortable and cool, for sleep.

Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.

Use your bedroom only for sleep and rest. It is best to take work materials, computers and televisions out of the sleeping environment.

Finish eating two to three hours before your regu-

lar bedtime.

Exercise regularly. It is best to complete your workout a few hours before bedtime.

Avoid all tobacco products. Used close to bedtime, they can lead to poor sleep.

Avoid caffeine in coffee, tea, soft drinks, and chocolate close to bedtime. It can keep you awake.

Avoid alcohol close to bedtime. It can lead to disrupted sleep later in the night.

We recommend getting seven to nine hours of sleep nightly, but there's no one formula that's right for everybody. The best indication is how rested and renewed you feel during the day.

Studies show that if you're healthy, you'll probably sleep well. And if you sleep well, you're likely to stay healthy.

Remember, Health is a Choice. If you have any comments or questions about health issues we've covered in this column, or an issue you'd like addressed, please call or write to:

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American Cancer Society Marks 33rd Great American Smokeout

The Best Time to Quit Smoking is Now

Thursday, November 20, is the 33rd Great American Smokeout, and the American Cancer Society continues its legacy of providing free resources to help smokers quit. The Great American Smokeout was inaugurated in 1976 to inspire and encourage smokers to quit for one day. Now, 44.2 percent of the 45.3 million Americans who smoke have attempted to quit for at least one day in the past year, and the Great American Smokeout remains a great opportunity to encourage people to commit to making a long-term plan to quit for good.

With all the resources available to help smokers quit, there has never been a better time to quit smoking, and the American Cancer Society is here to help. If you smoke, make a plan and set the Great American Smokeout, November 20, 2008, as your quit date. By calling the American Cancer Society Quitline® at 1-800-227-2345, people who plan to quit will be able to speak with

a trained counselor and receive free, confidential counseling.

Studies have found that Quitline can more than double a person's chances of successfully quitting tobacco. Callers to Quitline can be connected with smoking cessation resources in their communities, social support groups, Internet resources, and medication assistance referrals. Since its inception in 2000, Quitline has provided counseling support to more than 380,000 smokers.

The American Cancer Society offers other free resources – through Quitline and at www.cancer.org/GreatAmericans – that can increase a smoker's chances of quitting successfully, including tips and tools for friends, family, and coworkers of potential quitters to help them be aware and supportive of the struggle to quit smoking. Studies show the importance of social support in quitting smoking, as people are most likely to quit smoking when their friends, family, and coworkers decide to quit smoking. Popular online social net-

works such as Facebook and MySpace are also becoming support channels for people who want to quit, and American Cancer Society Smokeout-related downloadable desktop applications are available on these networks to help people quit or join the fight against tobacco.

"A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine found that social networks are helpful in quitting smoking," said [spokesperson]. "Friends and family can help the most by being aware and supportive of the struggle to quit, and the American Cancer Society has resources to help them show support for their loved one who is trying to quit."

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Each year, smoking accounts for an estimated 438,000 premature deaths, including 38,000 deaths among nonsmokers as a result of secondhand smoke. Half of all Americans who continue to smoke will die from smoking-related diseases.

Health Department to Deliver Flu Shots

Chatham County Health Department will be administering Flu Shots at the Alzheimer's Association Office on Thursday, December 4th, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., at the Alzheimer's Association, 201 Television Cr., Savannah, GA 31406

Medicaid and Medicare Part B will cover the cost of the shot. Please bring your Medicare or Medicaid cards with you. All others the cost is \$25.00 (Private Insurance

will NOT be accepted) Cash or Check only.

Refreshments will be provided by United Hospice.

Call 920-2231 by Tuesday, December 2, to reserve your shot today!

Even if you are healthy, if you live with or care for people at high risk for severe complications for influenza, you should get vaccinated. Groups at high risk include adults age 65 and older, infants, pregnant women,

kids and adults with chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart disease

Health Matters

Alzheimer's Association Holiday Workshop and Candlelight Vigil

Please join us for this event designed to provide tips for coping with caregiver stress, helpful hints for the holidays, and holiday gift ideas. We will follow this workshop with our annual Candlelight Vigil meant to encourage, honor and remem-

ber those touched by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. If you or a loved one's life has been changed by dementia, please join us. Light refreshments will be served after the program. This is a 1.5 hour event. Join us on Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2008 at

6:00pm. This year we will meet in the White Bluff United Methodist Church Sanctuary located at 11911 White Bluff Road, Savannah, GA.

Please try to RSVP, by calling 912-920-2231. This is a free event.

Open Enrollment Period for the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Coverage Begins

More Than 174,000 Georgia seniors are eligible for coverage, but not enrolled. New research shows 9 in 10 seniors in Medicare Part D program are satisfied with coverage

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The annual open enrollment period for the Medicare Part D prescription drug program begins on November 15, 2008, and recent estimates indicate that more than

174,000 of Georgia seniors are eligible for the program, but remain un-enrolled. Nationwide, as many as 6.6 million, or 15 percent of eligible seniors are without prescription drug coverage.

Extending November 15 – December 31, 2008, the enrollment period provides an opportunity for those Georgia Medicare beneficiaries and others across the country who have not yet

taken advantage of the program to do so. It also provides a timely opportunity for those who are enrolled to re-evaluate their current plan and make a change, if appropriate.

New public opinion research released by Medicare Today shows that just two in 10 enrollees are 'likely' or 'somewhat likely' to shop around and compare Medicare plans this year.

More than half (56 percent) of those enrolled say they are 'not at all likely' to do so. Conducted by KRC Research in Washington, DC, the survey also finds that 9 in 10 seniors are 'satisfied' with their Medicare prescription drug coverage, with 63 percent reporting that they are 'very satisfied.'

"Even individuals who have been pleased with their coverage so far should take advantage of this time to review and evaluate their current plan," said Mary Grealy, president of the Healthcare Leadership Council, which is coordinating Medicare Today's efforts. "Plans and costs change, as do the prescription needs of seniors as they age. What may have been the best plan for someone a year ago, may no longer be the option that provides the best drug coverage at the best price. We encourage people to take advantage of the consumer choice that is one of the strengths of this program."

In Georgia, approximately 1.1 million individuals are eligible to enroll in the Part D program, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Management Information Integrated Repository (MIIR). Of that number, approximately 950,000 have prescription drug coverage – either through the Medicare Part D program, an employer or former employer or other source. That leaves more than

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