

In Good Hands

A Free Monthly Newsletter For The Friends and Patients of: Dr. Bradley J. Weiss

“It is well to remember that the entire universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others.” - John Andrew Holmes

The answers to this question... and more... revealed in this month's newsletter...

Will You Be Like Superman (Or Superwoman) If You Sleep More And Take Vitamin D?



Natick – Let's start with a quick apology: No... sleeping more and taking Vitamin D will NOT make you like Superman or Superwoman! Sorry... but... new research is showing that they may improve your mind and health in many wonderful ways.

First, let's talk about SLEEP...

Benjamin Franklin is famous for many things. Maybe you've heard of that little kite flying incident. ☺

He is also famous for saying, "*WASTE not life*" and "*There will be sleeping enough in the grave.*"

More than 200 years later, the attitude towards sleep in America has not changed.

Many people are up at the crack of dawn or answering emails at 3 a.m. on their "crack-berry!" Franklin's quote has even been modernized to read...

"I'll Sleep When I'm Dead!"

"There is a cultural bias against sleep that sees it as akin to shutting down, or even to death," explains Dr. Jeffrey Ellenbogen, a Neurologist at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Sleep Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Most people, Dr. Ellenbogen says, think of the sleeping brain as similar to a computer that has "gone to sleep" — it does nothing productive. **Wrong.** Sleep enhances performance, learning and memory. Most of all, sleep improves creative ability to generate aha! moments and to uncover novel connections among seemingly unrelated ideas.

Dr. Ellenbogen's research at Harvard indicates that after sleep, people are 33 percent more likely to infer connections among distantly related ideas, and yet, as he puts it, these performance enhancements exist "completely beneath the radar screen."

In other words, people are more creative after sleep, but they don't know it.

Changing Attitudes

Business attitudes toward sleep may be starting to shift. Claire Stapleton, a spokeswoman for Google, says "grassroots" interest in sleep led to an on-campus talk by Sara C. Mednick, a napping expert. Google also installed EnergyPods, leather recliners with egg-like hoods that block noise and light, for employees to take naps at work.

But there is something much more important than just a nap and the total number of hours slept. Even more important is the...

Circadian Rhythm

The circadian rhythm is an internal clock that guides our daily cycle from sleep to wakefulness — and back to sleep again. But now researchers at Stanford think it may be doing much more.

Working with Siberian hamsters, biologist Norman Ruby has shown that having a functioning circadian system is critical to the hamsters' ability to remember what they have learned. "Without it," he said, "They can't remember anything."

Like all other animals, Siberian hamsters normally develop what amounts to *street smarts* about their environment.

But when Ruby interrupted their circadian system, the hamsters failed to demonstrate the same evidence of remembering their environment as hamsters with normally functioning circadian systems.

Until now, it has never been shown that the circadian system is crucial to learning and memory. This finding has implications for diseases that include problems with learning or memory deficits, such as Down Syndrome or Alzheimer's disease. The work is described in a paper published Oct. 1 online in the early edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Ruby is lead author on the paper.

“Losing Their Rhythm Cost Them A Lot”

And here’s something very interesting: According to one of the researchers, “We thought it might be possible to wipe out circadian rhythms and eliminate the rhythm in learning, but that the animals could still learn something. But they don’t. That is what was so surprising. They actually can’t remember anything. Losing their rhythms costs them a lot.”

And it is not about the overall number of hours slept. It is about WHEN: “What our data are showing is that these animals still performed terribly on a simple learning task, even though they’re getting loads of sleep. What this says is that the circadian system really is necessary for something that is deeply important: learning.”

More and more research is showing how important not only the amount of sleep you get – but also when you get it. Make sure you read this month’s “Tip Of The Month” to discover some great ways to get enough sleep and stay in your circadian rhythm!

But first... onward to...

The Health Benefits Of Vitamin D!

Once linked to only bone diseases such as rickets and osteoporosis, Vitamin D is now recognized as a major player in contributing to overall human health, emphasizes UC Riverside’s Anthony Norman, an international expert on Vitamin D.

In a paper published in the August issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Norman identifies Vitamin D’s potential for contributions to good health in the adaptive and innate immune systems, the secretion and regulation of insulin by the pancreas, the heart and blood pressure regulation, muscle strength and brain activity. In addition, access to adequate amounts of Vitamin D is believed to be beneficial towards reducing the risk of cancer.

Norman also lists 36 organ tissues in the body whose cells respond biologically to Vitamin D. The list includes bone marrow, breast, colon, intestine, kidney, lung, prostate, retina, skin, stomach and the uterus.

According to Norman, deficiency of Vitamin D can impact all 36 organs. Already, Vitamin D deficiency is associated with muscle strength decrease, high risk for falls, and increased risk for colorectal, prostate, breast and other major cancers.

"It is becoming increasingly clear to researchers in the field that Vitamin D is strongly linked to several diseases," said Norman, a distinguished professor emeritus of biochemistry and of biomedical sciences who has worked on Vitamin D for more than 45 years. "Its biological sphere of influence is much broader than we originally thought. The nutritional guidelines for Vitamin D intake must be carefully reevaluated to determine the adequate intake, balancing sunlight exposure with dietary intake, to achieve good health by involving all 36 target organs."

How Much Vitamin D?

"To optimize good health, you must have enough Vitamin D," Norman said. "Vitamin D deficiency is also especially of concern in third world countries that have poor nutritional practices and religious customs that require the body to be covered from head to toe. Ideally, to achieve the widest frequency of good health by population, we need to have 90 percent of the people with adequate amounts of Vitamin D."

The recommended daily intake of Vitamin D is 200 international units (IU) for people up to 50 years old. The recommended daily intake of Vitamin D is 400 IU for people 51 to 70 years old and 600 IU for people over 70 years old. Norman’s recommendation for all adults is to have an average daily intake of at least 2,000 IU.

While deficiency of Vitamin D impacts health negatively, ingestion of extremely high doses of Vitamin D can cause hypercalcemia, a condition in which the blood’s calcium level is above normal. The highest daily “safe” dose of Vitamin D is 10,000 IU.

One last note: You should NOT take this as medical advice to take a certain amount of Vitamin D. This newsletter is only providing current information about health topics. Please consult with your doctor before taking any supplements.

And remember, if you ever have any questions or concerns about your health, talk to us. PLEASE contact us with your questions. We are here to help and enjoy participating in your life long good health

Staying in the Game...

Dr. Brad Weiss affected my life significantly. Over my 37 years I have played sports on many levels; just short of the professional level (thanks to a broken shoulder- before I met Dr. Weiss). As an enthusiastic athlete, injuries are a fact of life.

After a wrist injury during a racquetball game; that was exacerbated by a slip and fall on an icy step. I went to an Orthopedic Surgeon. After prolonged physical therapy and extensive electric stimulation therapy (coupled with steroid anti-inflammatory drugs); my good Doctor was prepared to perform surgery and “fix” my problem “de Quervain’s Disease” (go ahead and “Google” it).

Fortunately for me; I was visiting Dr. Weiss for a back adjustment just before this intrusive surgery was scheduled to be performed. He made notice of the hard brace on my wrist/hand, during my appointment. Upon explaining my trouble, Dr. Weiss took quick action and healed my problem with the use of ART (Active Release Techniques). Within 3 visits my wrist troubles were gone. By the way, this happened 3 years ago and my wrist is still working as good as new.

Thanks to Dr. Weiss’ insight and abilities, I was able to avoid a painful and difficult surgery.

With every opportunity, I enthusiastically promote Dr. Weiss to all my family and friends.

I hope you will take advantage of his talent in order to better your own daily life. I recommend Dr. Weiss to everyone on my over 30 baseball team; the Hudson Cardinals. We all swear by the good Doctor!

Matthew Sandock

**Inspirational Story Of The Month –
The holiday’s may be over...but you got to read this feel good story**

An Amazing “Real Life” Santa Claus That Is An American Hero...

I know what you’re thinking. Santa Claus does NOT exist. You stopped believing some time around 7 or 8 years old because your older sibling or know-it-all friends told you how they found where mom and dad were hiding the presents. But – what if I told you -- there is a “real life” Santa Claus. And that he is changing lives and bringing happiness each and every December? Would you want to know a little more about him and what he is doing? Well, if you do... Here’s the story of a “real life” Santa Claus who is, without a doubt, an American hero we should all try to emulate. Cliff Archer does not live at the North Pole. He doesn’t have any reindeer named Rudolph. Heck, he doesn’t even have a red suit or white beard. In fact, Cliff is a VP of construction for an agency that builds housing for the homeless. He’s also a volunteer firefighter in his hometown, Levittown on Long Island. On top of all that – he has a wife and two teenage daughters. Seems like Cliff’s time is...

Sliced Pretty Thin!

Well... it is. Yet every November he gears up to play Santa to families who would otherwise have nothing to show for the holiday season but disappointment. He's been answering kids' pleas every year since 1988 when he was inspired by a newspaper article about the United States Postal Service's "Letters to Santa" program. Each year hundreds of thousands of appeals pour into the cavernous main post office in Manhattan, and Cliff doesn't shy away from even the most heartbreaking. "My parents were a cop and a nurse, and we had very little money when I was growing up," he says, with characteristic directness. "They were poor but honest, and they instilled in me the importance of always trying to help someone less fortunate. When I saw that article, I realized that anything I could do to make the holidays less bleak for someone having a hard time was worthwhile." So, for the past 19 years Cliff has responded to anywhere from 6 to 10 "Dear Santa" letters a year. He's got his system down pat. A few days after Thanksgiving, he picks up the letters. The next four weeks are a whirlwind of rounding up gifts. "Then comes what we refer to as 'D-Day,' when Joey, Mildred, and I make our big run." That would be Joey Lindicy and Mildred Lizardi, Cliff's co-workers at the New York State Housing Finance Agency -- his passion for "Project Santa" prompted them to join the cause. Thanks to donations from other colleagues and friends, by mid-December, Cliff's office is crammed with toys and clothes; last year he raised \$3,000 to fill in the blanks on the various wish lists. "Some kids ask for a computer, but in the end they're always thrilled with simple things like board games," he says. "In all this time, I've never seen a child unhappy with his gifts." As Christmas approaches, Cliff takes the donations home and adds them to the sizable stash of toys amassed by his wife, Joanne, who buys them on sale throughout the year. She and their two teenage daughters, Valerie, 16, and Danielle, 13, help sort, label, and pack everything. "We make sure that every child gets several toys and some clothes," he says. "And we always give the parents an envelope with at least \$100 cash."

Who Would Steal From Santa Claus And A Child In Need?

Cliff learned early on that it was best to hand over the gifts in person. "Once I left a package for a kid with the building superintendent because the family wasn't home, and I later found out that the super sold it," he says. Now he aims for letters that include phone numbers, so Mildred -- who also speaks Spanish -- can call and talk to a parent about whether there are other kids living in the household who need gifts too, and then coordinate the drop-off. Often parents can't believe someone would answer their children's letters. "Mildred is excellent at persuading them," Cliff says. "She's so warm and sweet -- a mom of three herself." Shortly before Christmas, Cliff and Joey map out the most efficient route and load everything up for delivery. At times, he finds himself wishing for a simple means of entry, like a chimney. "Now and then we get a family on the 20th floor of a building in the projects with a broken elevator," he says. "You should see the three of us chugging up the stairs with all the stuff." The bags always include groceries for a complete Christmas dinner -- a ham or a turkey plus all the trimmings -- bought with Cliff's own money. "When I started doing this, I noticed there usually wasn't much food in these apartments," he says. After nearly two decades, the best part of being Santa is the same as it was in the beginning: seeing the looks on the kids' faces. "When Mildred calls, she specifically asks the parents to please keep the fact that we're coming a surprise," he says. "Then they see this 6-foot-5 man walk in with tons of bundles. The kids can't believe it's all for them. The mothers often have tears streaming down their faces, and they give us their blessings. That's when I know that all the work and running around is absolutely worth it." Can you imagine if everyone had Cliff's attitude and helped out a few kids every holiday season? Imagine how much happiness that would bring to so many – even if just for that day.

Did You Know?...

★ **Did You Know?...** Hunter-gatherers in the Australian outback today live on 800 varieties of plant foods. Modern Americans live principally on three: corn, soy and wheat. • One third of Americans get 47 percent of their calories from junk foods. • The average American eats 300 more calories each day than he or she did in 1985. Added sweeteners account for 23 percent of those additional calories, added fats make up an additional 24 percent. • Vitamin D deficiency is widespread. • In real dollars, the price of fresh fruits and vegetables has risen nearly 40 percent since 1985. • Ten cups per day of green tea delayed cancer onset 8.7 years in Japanese women and three years in Japanese men. • Three meta-analyses of randomized, placebo-controlled trials found a 5-12 percent decrease in cholesterol levels in hyperlipidemic patients after at least 30 days' treatment with 600-900 mg of garlic extract. • Chocolate...may have a mild hypotensive [blood-pressure lowering] effect.

Tip Of The Month - 5 Ways To Get Better Sleep And Keep That Circadian Rhythm!



If you read the first article of this newsletter, I'm sure you realize two very important things: First, you need to get enough sleep. This is the total number of hours. But just as important is second: you need to stay in tune with your internal sleep/awake clock... or... circadian rhythm. Not getting enough sleep during the week and "catching up" on the weekends is not going to do you much good. The real solution is to go to bed and wake up at the same time each and every day. So, here are some tips to help you do that. And yes... *we all know it is more difficult than it sounds!*

(1) **Get Up Earlier** - If you want to get to bed earlier and easier, set your alarm for 5 AM and haul yourself out of bed the second you hear it go off -- *every single morning*. No matter what. This is the best way to reset your sleep schedule.

(2) **Read the Right Material** - There's a time of day when you've got to shut off your active mind and let the passive mind take over. This can happen just an hour before bed or just after you get home from work. You've got to figure out how long you need to transition out of that active mind that'll keep you thinking and awake all night, and keep yourself from partaking in any real mind-chatter-activating activities during that time.

(3) **Extinguish All Sources of Light** - *Any* light, even in the minutest amounts, can affect your quality of sleep. If there is a light source in the room, it will decrease your sleep quality. Kill it. Pitch black is the ideal situation.

(4) **Sweep Your Mind for Stray Thoughts** - It only takes a couple of minutes to sit down with a pen and pad (or a keyboard) and perform a mind sweep before tucking in for the night. Get every thought on your mind out of your head and into a tangible form. Afterwards, it literally feels like you've tipped your worries out into a bucket so that you don't have to deal with them until you're ready.

(5) **Avoid Computer and TV Screens** - While the picture on your computer screen might look like a bunch of windows and images standing still or moving the way things in real life move, the reality is that the screen is being redrawn so fast that the illusion of motion, or even solidity, is present. While you might not see a bombardment of repetitive flashing, your mind certainly gets hit with the strain of it, and your eyes and brain get stimulated further by it -- meaning you'll find it harder to get to sleep.

New Years Resolutions... It's NEW YEAR and like many people, you might have a list of healthy goals such for 2008. Please consult us regarding plans to exercise and lose weight. We can help you achieve your Health Goals in a safe and efficient way. Give us a call and make an appointment. We'll get you on your way for a healthier year!!!