



SLEEP PATTERNS AND AGING

Question: Does sleep change as you get older?

Answer: Yes and no. You can measure your sleep pattern against different metrics to determine whether it has changed. All animals have circadian rhythms, which is our natural sleep/wake cycle. Some people are night owls and others are early risers. Some people can nap anywhere and some suffer from insomnia.

Has your sleep pattern changed with the season? Daylight saving time may turn our clocks ahead or back, but the clock inside your body knows what it needs. Eventually, we adjust to time changes. Our eyes sense the setting sun, which triggers our bodies to start planning for bedtime, but it takes a few days. Jet lag works in much the same way.

Has your level of activity changed? As we get older and more sedentary, we might need less rest. Exercise throughout the day can help you sleep better because it makes you tired at night. Eating and drinking at night are activities that can affect sleep as well.

Has your medication changed? Some of us take medication for chronic conditions such as arthritis and high blood pressure. If your arthritis medication keeps

pain at bay all day, but wears off at night, you may find yourself waking with pain throughout the night. Waking at night for any reason interferes with your quality of sleep, and can aggravate health problems during the day. This includes getting up frequently to use the bathroom.

Has your mood changed? Sleep changes are a key indicator of depression and anxiety. If you find yourself waking up with racing thoughts or unable to “shut off” your brain at bedtime, these are signs of anxiety. If you are going over negative thoughts repeatedly or waking up with no interest in greeting the day, these are signs of depression. This is not a comprehensive list of mood symptoms, but they are something you can identify and treat.

Check with your doctor if you suspect medication or mood problems are interfering with your sleep. Seek out light or daylight when you wake up to keep that body clock set. Remain active daily to enjoy a restful night. Call one of our social workers if you would like to receive a helpful handout on sleep.

Sources: “When time shifts, remember your body has a clock, too,” *USA Today*, Kim Painter, 11/02/14. “Circadian Rhythms Fact Sheet,” http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Education/Pages/Factsheet_CircadianRhythms.aspx.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

“These turkeys in your frozen food section seem so small. Do they get any bigger?”

“No ma’am, they’re dead.”

—A *Prairie Home Companion* Pretty Good Joke Book

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

Go Green!

Receive Social Services Corner by email.
Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370,
or email info@wrmail.org.

Do you or does someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or visit www.wrpioneers.org to find out more about our assistance programs.



WHAT'S IN A HOLIDAY BUFFET?



Parties, open houses, gift baskets and holiday dinners are part of the season. Shipped edible gifts and home-delivered meals are also frequently in the

mix. It seems that during the holidays, there is food everywhere! A hot drink, a cookie platter—what's the harm?

In addition to the extra calories, fat and sugar, holiday foods may present an unseen health hazard. According to the Food and Drug Administration, 48 million Americans are sickened every year by food-borne illnesses, some seriously, and 3,000 fatally. For the holiday buffet, party foods or gifts, it is important to know a few facts to stay safe and satisfied.

CLEAN – Wash your hands before preparing food and before you are ready to eat a snack or a meal. Check to see that surfaces are clean wherever you consume or prepare food.

Sources: "Safe Food Handling: What You Need to Know," available to read or print at <http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm255180.htm>. "Check Your Steps," information about the risks of food poisoning at <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/basics/>.

SEPARATE – Cross-contamination causes many problems for people with food allergies and leads to the growth of bacteria. Buffet food should always be refilled onto a clean platter, for example, and raw foods should not mix with cooked items or their juices.

COOK – Temperature is a major factor in food safety, but you'll seldom see a thermometer at the party buffet table. The general rule is to keep hot foods warm (145–165 degrees or over) and cold foods chilled (40 degrees or lower).

CHILL – Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible, leaving room in the fridge for cold air to circulate. Food left at room temperature for over two hours should be tossed out.

For packaged food gifts that give you pause or cause for concern, you can check the FDA website at www.foodsafety.gov for packaging errors, recalls and safety alerts. Of course, when in doubt, throw it out.

Our goal is not to strike fear in your holiday stomach, but rather to make you a conscientious consumer of festive foods.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Council of Better Business Bureaus: <http://www.bbb.org/>

The Council is dedicated to fostering fair and honest relationships between businesses and consumers, instilling consumer confidence and contributing to an ethical business environment.

Call 2 Recycle: (877) 723-1297, <http://www.call2recycle.org/>

Call 2 Recycle is a nonprofit funded by battery and product manufacturers committed to responsible recycling. Visit its website to find a local recycling center by ZIP code.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Live your life so that whenever you lose, you are ahead.”

—Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit www.wrpioneers.org.