

# DAYTIME HABITS HOLD KEYS TO NIGHTTIME SLEEP

By Jason Webb

For The Tribune

A good night's sleep is important not only to be able to function well, but also because people who suffer from chronic sleep problems are more apt to suffer from serious diseases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among those diseases are hypertension, diabetes, depression and obesity, as well as from cancer, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity.

Dr. Kelli Janata, is a pulmonologist and sleep specialist with North Colorado Medical Center. Among the patients she treats are those who complain of not feeling rested after sleep.

Correcting sleeping problems begins with ensuring the patient understands how their lifestyle affects their sleep habits. One of the first things Janata does is ask patients to track their activities in a detailed sleep diary.

"The patient tracks everything they do from the time they get up to the time they go to sleep," Janata said. At the first appointment, she looks over the diary to see if she can find what could be causing the sleep problems.

"Just as the quality of our sleep impacts us during our waking hours, our daily activities affect how well we sleep," Janata said. "It's important to recognize and avoid certain activities that commonly cause people to have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep."

As an example, Janata notes that when people who suffer from insomnia take naps during the day, it throws off the body's natural clock, or circadian rhythm, which tells the body when and how long to sleep. Also, while getting a workout in before bed may seem like a good idea, exercise produces adrenaline, which can make it more difficult to fall asleep, notes Janata.

Recent research shows the blue-green waves of light emitted by laptops, smart phones and tablets can stimulate the eyes and turn off production of the body's natural sleep hormone, melatonin. Other potential daytime activities that have an impact on sleep include eating a high-fat diet and consuming stimulants, such as caffeine and nicotine, later in the day.

"Stimulants, like caffeine and nicotine, can delay the onset of sleep or can interrupt your sleep," says Janata. "Also, drinking alcohol at night may help some people fall asleep, but the effects usually wear off in a few hours, leading to fragmented sleep."

As the patient records activities in the sleep diary, a clearer picture of what could be causing the sleep disturbances takes shape. Janata can then work with the patient to change behaviors to help promote better sleep.

One of the key messages Janata stresses to her patients is that bed is for sleep rather than reading or watching television. Janata also advises patients not to get frustrated if they are having trouble falling asleep because it can make the problem worse.

"If you're not asleep within 20 minutes, get up and do something boring," says Janata. "I tell people to go to the living room and read the dictionary backwards starting at 'z.'"

Another important factor to getting a good night sleep is to make sure the room is at a comfortable, cool temperature, which stimulates the body's production of melatonin. A hot shower three hours before bedtime can also help relax the body before falling asleep.

"Americans put sleep on the back burner, and we live in 24-hour society," says Janata. "Sleep is vitally important. If you have problems sleeping, get help."

*Jason Webb is a public relations specialist for Banner Health.*

## Events

from P.3

plaque in the arteries. The procedure begins with a fast, painless computed tomography CT exam. CT, more commonly known as CAT scanning, uses x-rays and multiple detectors to create interior images of the heart. The Heart Score program includes a 10-minute consultation with a Wellness Specialist, focusing on cardiac risk factor education, identification of non-modifiable and modifiable risks and lifestyle behavior change options. The cost is \$199 and payment is due at time of service. NCMC Wellness Services is not able to bill insurance. To schedule an appointment please call (970) 350-6070.

« NCMC Adult Fitness, the

Adult Fitness Program is available to people in the community who are interested in starting an exercise program in a health care setting. The cost per month: individual \$45 or couple (living in the same household) \$80. For more information call (970) 350-6204.

« **STAR**, 5:30-7 p.m., Sept. 18 in the Cancer Institute Conference Room at NCMC. Come and support, touch, and reach breast cancer survivors (Breast Cancer Support Group). For further information please contact, Betty Parsons at (970) 339-7137.

« **Prostate Cancer Support Group**, 5:30-7 p.m. Sept. 18 in the Cancer Institute Conference Room at NCMC. For further information please

contact: Julianne Fritz at (970) 350-6567.

« **Pulmonary Rehabilitation-Lung Disease Management**, education and exercise, for more information and opportunities contact (97) 350-6924.

« **Flu clinics**, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., Sept. 22-Sept. 25, at the NCMC Wellness Walk-in Clinic. Flu shots available for ages 4-17 with parent present. We accept Medicare Part B for the flu and pneumonia vaccines; please bring your Medicare Part B card with you to the clinic. The clinic offers, flu shots, \$25, nasal flu mist, \$35, pneumonia vaccine, \$90, and Tdap vaccine, \$55. NCMC will not bill insurance; we do accept cash, credit card or check.

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