

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

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August 15, 2012
Chat Topic:

Balancing Work and Family

Every month, you will have the opportunity to chat on-line with a trained counselor. These live chats are held from 12:15-12:45 PM & 6:00-6:30 PM CST.

Come Join Us!

August 2012
At A Glance

**National Immunization
Awareness Month
August 1st—31st**

**For more information, visit
www.cdc.gov**

**Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Awareness Month
August 1st—31st**

**For more information, visit
www.fsma.org**



Is a Good Night's Sleep Enough?

Sleepiness linked to hyperactivity plus learning difficulties and misbehavior

If your child is acting up at school or struggling to focus or learn, it may not necessarily be a psychiatric condition or learning disability. They might just be really, really sleepy.

A recent study found that the approximately 15 percent of children who suffer from excessive daytime sleepiness are more likely to experience learning difficulties, to have attention or hyperactivity issues, or to misbehave.

See a sleep specialist if your child is excessively sleepy during the day.

Susan Calhoun, PhD, an associate professor of psychiatry in the Sleep Research and Treatment Center at Penn State College of Medicine, and her colleagues conducted a study of 508 children, aged 6 to 12, from a group called The Penn State Child Cohort. Each child underwent a 2.5-hour neurocognitive assessment and then went through a 9-hour sleep study to see if they had any sleeping issues. The tests measured the student's thinking speed, intelligence, attention skills, memory and visual-motor skills.

The researchers also questioned the parents about their children's behavior and learning and attention abilities. Then the children were divided into two groups according to whether their parents reported that their child had excessive daytime sleepiness or not. A child was identified as having excessive daytime sleepiness if his or her parent answered yes to either "Does your child have a problem with sleepiness during the day?" or "Has a teacher or other supervisor commented that your child appears sleepy during the day?" Approximately a third of the children were identified as being excessively sleepy during the day based on observations of both the parent and a teacher. The number identified as sleepy by parents only was 42 percent and, by teachers only, 26 percent. They found that children whose parents reported they had excessive daytime sleepiness were more likely to misbehave, have trouble learning or be hyperactive - even when controlling for the amount of sleep the children got.

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Deer Oaks EAP Services, your Employee Assistance Program, is always available to you and your dependents. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks at:

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Continued: Is a good night's sleep enough?



The largest association was with learning problems: kids with excessive sleepiness were seven times more likely to have learning difficulties. However, the reasons for the daytime sleepiness did not include the expected usual suspects of sleep apnea or simply not getting enough sleep - the aspects that William Kohler, MD, the director of the Florida Sleep Institute in Spring Hill, Florida, found most intriguing about the study.

Because the study authors defined obstructive sleep apnea as stopping breathing for at least five seconds - instead of the ten seconds more typically used in the definition - Dr. Kohler said he would have expected that the researchers would have found more sleep apnea. But that wasn't the case.

"The fact that in this particular study, they did not show any correlation between the excessive daytime sleepiness and the obstructive sleep apnea was interesting," Dr. Kohler said. "But it's a good article, one of the many showing the significance of abnormal functioning related with sleep or sleep aspects."

Although Dr. Kohler said it was valuable for providing more evidence of the way problems with sleepiness or sleep can contribute to poor cognitive function, poor functioning during the day, poor emotional functioning and similar issues, it did not discuss treatment or go into much detail on possible causes of excessive daytime sleepiness. "Unfortunately, it didn't point out potential treatment mechanisms, which would get back to whatever the cause of the excessive daytime sleepiness was," Dr. Kohler said. The researchers did note that the problems with feeling sleepy appeared rooted in obesity, depression, anxiety, asthma and an inability to fall asleep. But the article does not go into detail on these.

The researchers did find that fast thinking abilities and a good memory lessened the impact that daytime sleepiness had on a child's learning or attention and hyperactivity problems. According to Calhoun, the researchers were surprised that the children showing the difficulties in school or with paying attention were not showing symptoms of getting insufficient sleep. In fact, insufficient sleep in this study was not associated with the behavior and learning problems observed.

The article appeared in the May issue of the journal *Sleep*. The research was funded by the National Institutes of Health. The authors declared no financial conflicts of interest.



Source: <http://www.1-800-therapist.com/news-article/sleepiness-linked-hyperactivity-plus-learning-difficulties-and-misbehavior>



EAP Spotlight



Retiree Assistance

If you are considering retirement, the EAP can help make the transition easier with legal and financial assistance, referrals to community resources, short-term counseling, and a library of online resources.

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Aging in the Information Age



Mild cognitive impairment might be less common in older people who are mentally active using computers

The “information age” has given many people more access to social activities and learning through computers. Elderly people who stay mentally active using computers may lower their risk of losing cognitive abilities. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) in later life can lower quality of life and increases risk of developing Alzheimer’s Disease. Scientists are learning that some lifestyles are linked to lowering the chances of developing MCI. Staying mentally and physically active may be the key to keeping the mind strong.

People with MCI lose cognitive abilities, like thinking and memory, more so than what is seen in normal aging, but MCI is less severe than Alzheimer’s Disease. A study by Yonas Geda, MD, of the Mayo Clinic, and colleagues interviewed 926 people aged 70 and older to measure their cognitive abilities. After the interview, they asked the participants to report on their diet, exercise, and computer use. Dr. Geda’s study found that the odds of having MCI were lower for people who rated moderate levels of exercise, like brisk walking, yoga, aerobics, or tennis, compared to people who rated only low levels of exercise, like slow walking, slow dancing, or bowling. For patients who reported moderate exercise, regular computer use decreased the odds of developing MCI even further.

DailyRx spoke with Jay Seitz, PhD, a neuropsychologist, about this finding. He said, “Physical exercise has direct and positive benefits on the central nervous system, indeed a cascade of beneficial neurochemical effects, and mental stimulation (e.g., computer use) adds additional value in preventing cognitive decline in the elderly.”

Dr. Geda’s study was observational and could only look at the odds of having MCI. More research is needed to find out how computer use actually influences changes in memory during aging. The paper was published in the May issue of the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. Authors on this study report financial affiliations with the pharmaceutical companies Pfizer, Lilly, Allon, Forest, Elan, and Baxter, among others.

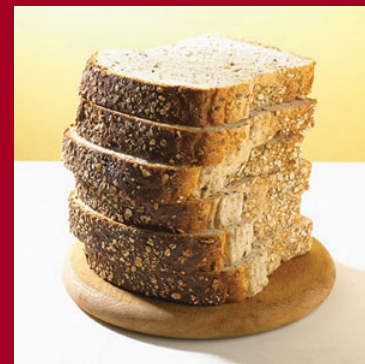


Source: <http://www.1-800-therapist.com/news-article/mild-cognitive-impairment-might-be-less-common-older-people-who-are-mentally-active>

Matters of the Heart



Tips to Lower Your Blood Pressure



Follow the DASH Diet

To help lower your blood pressure, the American Heart Association suggests following the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan.

The DASH Diet:

- **Grains and grain products:** 7–8 daily servings
- **Vegetables:** 4–5 daily servings
- **Fruit:** 4–5 daily servings
- **Low-fat or nonfat dairy:** 2–3 daily servings
- **Meat, poultry, and fish:** 2 daily servings or less
- **Nuts, seeds, and legumes:** 4–5 servings per week
- **Fats and oils:** 2–3 daily servings
- **Low-fat sweets:** 5 servings per week

Source: www.hearthealthyonline.com

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Frugal Back-to-School Shopping Tips



As the summer season winds down, the start of a new school year is fast approaching. Every new school year presents new challenges and opportunities for kids. The new school year also presents a challenge for parents: how to pay for all the school supplies children need for the year without overspending.

The best strategy for back-to-school shopping is to start with a plan. Many schools provide a list of the supplies students will need during the school year, so make sure you have that list before you start shopping. Now that you know what supplies your kids will need, start looking for ways to save.

- *See what school supplies you already have.* Back-to-school supply lists usually don't vary much from year-to-year. Check to see what your child brought home at the end of last year to see if there are any salvageable school supplies they can use this year.
- *Look for special promotions.* Right before the school year begins, many stores offer back-to-school sales. Watch for special promotions such as free shipping and those useful "two-for-one" deals.
- *Do your shopping during tax-free days.* These days usually last for an entire weekend in either July or August. This is a great time to buy t-shirts, socks, and school uniforms.
- *Shop at local consignment stores.* The end of summer is when many thrift stores receive gently-used clothing. These stores offer low-priced quality merchandise. Thrift stores have strict policies for accepting items so you don't have to worry about buying anything damaged.
- *Take advantage of Thursday sales.* Many department store sales begin on Thursday and run through Sunday. Many people save their shopping for the weekend, but a trip to the mall on a Thursday can produce great savings. Plus, you'll get first rights on merchandise.

Finally, to save on back-to-school shopping, it's important to set a budget and stick to it. With proper planning, you can prepare your children for another school year without breaking the bank.

Source: <http://www.moneymanagement.org/Budgeting-Tools/Credit-Articles/Youth-and-Money/Frugal-Back-to-School-Shopping-Tips.aspx>

About Money Management International

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