



Sleep Times

NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Greetings Members,

Recently we had occasion to make a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority relating to an advertisement which portrayed a young man struggling to use a CPAP machine. The thrust of the advertisement was that CPAP was expensive and difficult to use compared to a Mandibular Advancement Splint (MAS). While MAS treatment may have its place in treating OSA it is not a replacement for CPAP which is recognised as the most effective treatment. The advertisement ceased and the matter was deemed settled.



If you have difficulty in using CPAP approach us, speak to us, send us an email, we may be able to help.

I recall my first few weeks using CPAP. After the first couple of days of uninterrupted sleep, I struggled with a particular type of mask. I was sure I would never be able to use the CPAP any longer but then I tried quite a different mask and found my solution. I have now used CPAP for a number of years without any problem or discomfort.

Our web pages have been upgraded and improved. Have a look and browse through the information. You are bound to find something of interest to you and may even have some questions answered for you.

We have been approached by a person who provides a "sleep radio", broadcasting soothing music over the internet to assist people to relax and fall asleep. We are currently having a look at this and I wonder if you have any thoughts on this as an aid to sleep. Have you tried listening to relaxing music to help you fall asleep? Write to us and let us know what experience you may have had.

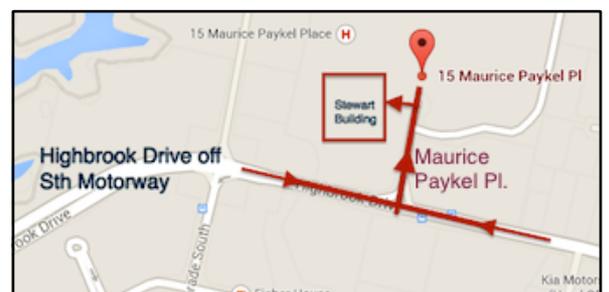
Details of our AGM are published in this newsletter. If you are able to attend we would be pleased to welcome you.

Sleep well.

Michael Matson

SAANZ Annual General Meeting and Auckland Support Meeting

The SAANZ AGM will be held in the Stewart Building at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, 15 Maurice Paykel Place, East Tamaki at 6pm on Wednesday 23rd November. Refreshments will be provided at the start of the meeting so you can come straight from work. The AGM is expected to be a brief meeting and followed by a speaker and question time so do come along and join us. Put the date in your calendar now and look out for further details in the next newsletter.



The effects of sleep on productivity and the workforce

Below are excerpts from the transcript of a video of Gowling WLG's Anna Fletcher and Dr Vicki Culpin discussing the crucial role that sleep plays in our overall health and wellbeing, why it's all about quality over quantity and what we can do to improve the quality of our own sleep. The video and full transcript can be accessed on our website at <http://www.sleepapnoeanz.org.nz/overview.shtml>

We know that sleep is good for mental and physical health and well-being, but do we know quite how important sleep is, not just to employees, but also to the organisations that employ them?

According to sleep expert Professor Vicki Culpin sleep deprivation can impact on performance in the same way as alcohol and yet no employer would tolerate drinking on the job.



Here Vicki discusses the importance of good sleep and strategies for improving sleep with Anna Fletcher a Director in the Employment, Labour and Equalities team. It's a compelling account of the importance of sleep as an issue that employers may want to understand better to support the wellbeing of staff, reduce health and safety risks and improve business performance.

Anna: So, Vicki, what is your background and your interest in sleep?

Vicki: I started out life as a cognitive psychologist, so I spent time working on memory and how to improve memory, that was my topic on my PhD, and through that I became interested in sleep because I had a sleep disorder called sleep apnoea - and one of the most common symptoms of people with sleep apnoea is that their memory gets poorer and they often go to the doctor because they think they have got memory problems and it turns out to be a sleep problem.

So I came into the sleep field really though my interest in memory, but working in a sleep lab and doing some research with a colleague in a sleep lab I suddenly realised that the topic of sleep was way more interesting than the topic of memory. So I then became very interested in sleep and the wellbeing issue. About nine years ago I moved from a traditional academic institution to a business school environment and realised that that topic of wellbeing and resilience, and particularly sleep, was so pertinent and so it went from there.

Anna: So why is sleep so important?

Vicki: Sleep can affect us physically - we are more likely to pick up low lying bugs and germs, colds, stomach infections, those kinds of things. Sleep debt that goes on for a number of years is quite chronic - and that leads to much more significant and serious physical effects such as heart disease, stroke, general cardio vascular issues, type 2 diabetes, obesity, so really quite significant issues. On a more psychological side of things, it affects our communication skills, our social skills, our decision making, our ability to judge risk, our problem solving, our creativity and on and on and on. The list is quite vast. Basically it does not take long at all: very poor sleep over a couple of nights and things start to fall down, high level decision making, creativity, problem solving. So what does it not affect is probably a better question.

Anna: OK. So how much sleep do I need?

Vicki: Very good question. It is hugely individual. A really good way of starting to think about it is the average healthy adult needs between roughly seven to eight hours a night, so that is a good starting point, but then of course it is individual - so you will have people who are very fit and healthy and happy to have less than seven or others who require more than eight. But as a good starting point go for seven to eight and then judge in the morning when you wake up: if you have had seven to eight, how do you feel, good or bad?

You should be waking up generally feeling refreshed. If you are saying you feel bad more frequently than good, and you are getting maybe seven hours, that is a suggestion that maybe you need slightly more than that. If you are waking up after 6½ hours and feeling fantastic, it is a suggestion maybe you are one of those lucky people that needs less. But as a rule of thumb, aim for around seven to eight hours.

Anna: And if I am a poor sleeper, what can I do about that?

Vicki: OK. A whole range of things.

It depends why you are a poor sleeper. So there are things that are sort of maybe keeping you awake at night, so sort of cognitively procrastinating, going around things over and over again in your head, we all do that.

A really good way of solving that or trying to help that is a couple of hours before you go to bed, basically do something called free form writing - blank sheet of paper, stopwatch for three minutes and just write. Do not make sense of it: you are not writing a list, you are not writing a novel you just write, write, write, you are not allowed to take your pen off the paper and you do it for three solid minutes. It is quite hard to do because we are just not hardwired to do that, we want to make sense of it, but it is almost like a psychological trick of outputting everything that is in your head on to that sheet of paper. As long as you do not do it quite close to bed that really might help.

And then there are things like poor sleep hygiene, so things like watching TV, reading an engaging book, eating food or exercising too close to sleep time... So again, the general rule of thumb is make sure that with those kinds of activities you have got at least a two-hour gap before you go to bed. TV and books are OK, but they should not be

cognitively engaging, because the minute you start to engage yourself cognitively, you are waking yourself up. Blue light, laptops, tablets are a definite no no, again about two hours before bed.

Then there is the bedroom environment, so making sure that you are not working in the bedroom, making sure that the temperature in the bedroom is not too hot or too cold, making sure that if you have had a warm bath or a warm shower, you have let your body temperature cool very slightly before you fall asleep because we do not tend to fall asleep very effectively when we are too hot.

Then there are things like: check that you do not wake up in the middle of the night so is the central heating clock clicking on and waking you up? Have you got a bright outside light that is turning on and waking you up? Do you have small children coming along and poking you in the eyes?

Those are the kinds of things, the external environment, that can also affect you and then really, basics like your duvet and your pillow, are also things that can really affect the quality of your sleep. So you have to look at sort of the internal environment, what is going on in your head, and the external environment as well.

Anna: Great. Thanks very much.

Vicki: My pleasure.

Nutrition Corner

This newsletter, our nutrition corner is about foods that support healthy sleep. During our undiagnosed stage of sleep apnoea, many of us developed poor sleep habits that have remained after CPAP use, so here are some natural foods to support healthy sleep.



1. Drink Tart Cherry Juice - A ½ cup to a 1 cup of tart cherry juice is a tasty way to drift off to sleep because it's full of tryptophan. Tryptophan is an essential amino acid that converts to serotonin, which then converts to melatonin. Melatonin helps maintain our sleep and wake cycle by causing drowsiness and lowers body temperature, working with the central nervous system to sync our biological clock.
2. Valerian is a hardy plant whose roots are used in a number of ways as a sedative and sleep aid. It is thought to work by increasing the amount of GABA (gamma aminobutyric acid) which helps regulate the action of nerve cells and has a calming effect. It's easy to brew up a cup of tea, but if you find the odour too strong, it is also available in capsule form. Put 1 tsp of valerian root in your infusion device and pour the hot water over it. Cover and steep for 15 minutes. Uncover, remove device or strain. Add milk or honey if you'd like for flavour.
3. Have a banana half-an-hour before bed and up your magnesium levels while simultaneously relaxing your muscles.
4. Chamomile has long been a reliable remedy for helping people doze off. It relaxes your muscles, and is thought that, potentially, a substance called apigenin can bind to GABA receptors which affect the central nervous system and sleepiness. Other studies have disagreed with apigenin theory, and think other constituents in the chamomile are what act as a sedative. Either way, it's tasty and it makes you tired. If you're using fresh flowers, use only the flower heads and compost the stems. Place the flowers in a teapot and pour on boiling water. Let steep for 5-6 minutes and serve hot. If using dried flowers use 2 rounded tablespoons. Add a little honey and milk to taste. You can squeeze in the juice of a freshly sliced lemon to taste as well.
5. Magnesium is one of the most vital minerals, and yet most of us are lacking it. You can thank increasingly poor diets for this one. Magnesium plays a huge role in the functioning of GABA receptors, which is the primary neurotransmitter that calms your central nervous system, relaxes you, and can help prepare you for sleep. GABA won't necessarily make you drift off to sleep magically, but you can be pretty sure you're going to have a hard time sleeping without it. While the best way to up magnesium is to eat a balanced diet, taking supplements can greatly help.
6. Lemon balm is one of those ancient herbs that people have turned to for centuries. Once thought to be an "herbal-cure all", it was used to treat anything from asthma to snake bites. These days, it's used primarily to lift mood and promote calmness and relaxation. Place 2 tablespoons of dried lemon balm, or 8-10 tablespoons of fresh lemon balm and 2 teaspoons dried chamomile in a mug and cover with boiling water. Steep for 5 minutes, strain, and drink 30-45 minutes before bed.
7. Saint John's Wort - Like lemon balm, Saint John's Wort is used frequently to help with depression, and in turn helps with disrupted sleep. Its main constituent (hypericin) is thought to work by reuptake inhibition, which raises the overall level of serotonin in the brain. More serotonin = more melatonin =



better sleep. You can take it in capsule form, or prepare a strong tea to use as a sleep aid. Place 2 tsp of the herb in a mug and cover with boiling water. Steep for 5-10 minutes, strain, and drink once daily (either morning or 30-45 minutes before bed.)



8. Hops Into Bed - The first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word hops is probably beer, but this quick growing vine is also an excellent remedy for calming nerves and promoting relaxation (not in the form of beer, sorry!) Rather, it can be made into a strong tea and drunk right before bed, or made into a sleep sachet and placed under your pillow at night (just replace or add it to the lavender). Place 2 tablespoons of dried hops into a pyrex glass jar with a tightly fitting lid and cover with boiling water. Allow it to steep for at least 5 hours, or overnight, and then strain. Reheat or chill and drink a cup 30-45 minutes before bedtime for an easy and restful slumber. This will keep in the refrigerator for 2 days.
9. Cozy Up with Catnip - Catnip, a plant that is a member of the mint family. The compound responsible for catnip's effects is called nepetalactone. It can make people relaxed, drowsy, and ready for bed. Enjoy it in the form of a warm tea before bed with a little bit of honey. Place catnip in a mug and cover with boiling water. Steep for 10 minutes, covered, and then add honey to taste if you like. Drink 30 minutes before bedtime.
10. Sip A Glass of Warm Milk - While there is the sleep inducing amino acid tryptophan in milk, studies are debatable that it actually does do anything. However many people find the warmth soothing and relaxing, helping them unwind both physically and mentally. The routine of a glass of warm milk is like any other routine that you need to complete before bed, getting you one step closer to falling asleep. Roughly 30 minutes before bed, start winding down. Turn off electronics, read a book, and heat up a glass of milk to a toasty warm, but still comfortable, temperature.



The above information was from the Every Day Roots website in an article entitled 18 Natural Sleep Aids to Get Better Sleep and can be found at <http://everydayroots.com/sleep-remedies>

Fitness Tip

Park and Walk - We tend to think of exercise as something that fits into a special slot of the day - and often one to be avoided. However I have found that the best fitness activity is one that is part of what you do on any given day. Walking is now my favourite and I have managed to stretch my limit from struggling to do a couple of kms to averaging 25-30 kms per week mostly by walking where previously I would drive. If I finish my library book I now walk the 5kms to the library, have a bowl of latte at my favourite cafe next door and then catch the bus home. If I want some fabric for my quilt making I walk 7.5kms from my home near Paraparaumu Beach to Waikanae - mostly along the beautiful river tracks. If I do drive in to town to do the grocery shopping, I park near the supermarket and walk to all the other shops I want to visit first and then conclude with the groceries. When I go into Wellington to donate blood platelets I catch the train, bus to the hospital and then walk the 5kms back to the station via the waterfront (or via the shops if the weather is wet or cold). You can also walk to visit friends, go to a movie and then walk home or just get out and walk on the beach on a windy day. Those living in the country may need to drive to somewhere they can walk, but there's bound to be shopping most weeks or you probably have some great bush walks not too far away that you'll start to find that you enjoy, and you'll then sleep better at night. Don't forget to include some stretching after your walk to keep your muscles flexible and pain free.



Q&A - questions submitted via the website and support meetings

As an organisation we do not provide medical advice, but we do have contact with professionals who can answer questions. In this section we share answers to questions that have been submitted. If you have a question it should be submitted by email to saanz.editor@gmail.com, via the contact form on the website or posted to P.O. Box 88, Hamilton, 3240. All questions will be handled confidentially so there is no need to feel sensitive about your condition being made public. No names or locations will be revealed.

Check out the website questions section http://www.sleepapnoeanz.org.nz/frequently_asked_questions.shtml

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