

Back to Sleep ***Back-to-School Season Creates a Shorter Sleep Schedule***

As children throughout the country awake to a new school year, parents contemplate whether their child's summer sleeping schedule will be saved by the bell.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, only 20 percent of children get an optimal nine hours of sleep on school nights and one-third get less than seven. More than a quarter (28 percent) of high school students fall asleep in school at least once a week and 14 percent arrive late or miss school once a week because they oversleep.

"Biological changes during puberty affect adolescents' sleep patterns making them physiologically unable to fall asleep until at least 11:00 p.m.," explains the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine (KAOM) "This may be fine during the summer when they can sleep later in the morning, but it's not fine during the school year."

While the average teen needs approximately nine hours of sleep, a bedtime of 11:00 p.m. means he or she only gets an estimated seven hours of sleep because of current school schedules. As a result, many teens experience fatigue throughout the school day.

Some effects of sleep deprivation may include:

- Limited ability to learn, listen and concentrate
- Acne and other skin problems
- Increased likelihood of illness
- Aggressive or inappropriate behavior such as yelling or being impatient with teachers or family members
- Overeating or unhealthy eating that may lead to weight gain
- Increased use of caffeine and nicotine

"The most frightening consequences of sleepiness are injuries related to attention lapses and delayed response times at critical moments, such as while driving," explains KAOM.

According to the National Sleep Foundation, 60 percent of Americans have driven while drowsy and 37 percent have admitted to actually falling asleep at the wheel. Drowsiness was reported as the most frequent cause in at least 100,000 police-reported traffic crashes each year, killing more than 1,500 Americans and injuring another 71,000 according to the

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Drivers under the age of 25 are involved in more than 50 percent of these crashes. KAOM suggests following a few sleeping tips to improve your teenager's sleep patterns:

- **Educate yourself** about adolescent development and sleep needs.
- **Look for signs** of sleep deprivation and sleepiness in your child, such as:
 - o difficulty waking in the morning
 - o irritability late in the day
 - o falling asleep spontaneously during quiet times of the day
 - o sleeping for extra long periods on the weekends.
- **Talk with your children** about their sleep/wake schedules and level of sleepiness. Assess the time spent in extracurricular and employment activities with regard to their sleep patterns and needs, and make adjustments if necessary.
- **Enforce regular sleep schedules** for all children and maintain appropriate schedules as they grow older.
- **Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom**
- **Avoid caffeine**
- **Be a good role model:** Make sleep a high priority for yourself and your family.

KAOM further explains that obtaining enough sleep is a vital part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) provide. Osteopathic physicians are fully licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. D.O.s can also use their hands to help diagnose and treat injury and illness and to encourage the body's natural tendency toward good health through the use of Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT). For more information about D.O.s and osteopathic medicine, visit www.osteopathic.org.

The American Osteopathic Association supports programs to promote the education and understanding of sleep and its impact on health.