



Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

Health and Wellness News

ISSUE 43

OCTOBER 2024



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Importance of Sleep 2
(continued)

NOVA Classification System 4

Spirituality Corner: Living Seasonally 6

Recipe: Focaccia 7

The Importance of Sleep

As the days grow shorter and we head into winter, many people struggle to achieve a good night's sleep. Stress, busy work, school schedules, and the demands of modern life can eat into our precious sleep time. People don't prioritize sleep—staying up late to finish projects, study, watch tv or play video games—but **sleep is as essential to our health as diet and exercise.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than a third of Americans report getting less than 7 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. About

30% of adults show symptoms of insomnia, and sleep apnea affects 9% to 38% of the population. In addition to stress and the worries of life keeping us awake at night, American culture seems to glorify forgoing sleep for work, study, or

social time, when in fact, it puts our health at great risk. Not only that, but most studies also show that skimping on sleep to complete tasks is ineffective in the long run. Students who "pull all-nighters" score lower on tests than those who sleep, and work done when we are sleep-deprived is often of poorer quality.

Sleep plays a vital role in our mental and physical health throughout the course of our lives. It is a time when our bodies perform restorative functions, such as cell growth and toxin removal, and when our brains sort and store information.

After even one night of poor sleep, a person may experience noticeable effects. They may be groggy, irritable, and emotional.

Drowsiness can impair physical performance and reflexes and may increase the likelihood of accidents. Poor sleep makes it harder to process and store information. Physical symptoms of a poor night's sleep might include respiratory symptoms, gastrointestinal distress, and aches and pains. Blood tests from people who have experienced a night of poor sleep reveal changes in blood proteins linked to immune function, metabolism, and blood sugar control.

Chronic poor sleep is linked to even more

concerning health outcomes. Those who regularly sleep too little or experience regular sleep disturbance have higher risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, depression, dementia, and even certain cancers.

Good sleep involves not just the quantity of time we are asleep, but the quality of that sleep. Most people need between 6-8 hours of sleep a night, although some people need as little as 6. Young adults, those who are sick, or those who are recovering from sleep deprivation, may need as many as 10 hours of sleep.

Sleep quality matters just as much as quantity. If a person has trouble falling sleep, wakes up frequently during the night, and feels tired even after getting enough sleep, they may not be reaping the full benefits of sleep. Health conditions like sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, chronic pain, insomnia, and other issues may prevent a person from entering into the deep sleep needed to maintain health.



Continued on page 2

The Importance of Sleep (continued)

The Cycles of Sleep

When we sleep, we cycle through four different stages of sleep, each with particular characteristics.

The **first stage** of a sleep cycle is brief, when a person first falls asleep. The body is not fully relaxed, but brain and body activity begin to slow. A person may be easily awoken in this stage.

In the **second stage** of sleep, body temperature drops, muscles relax, and breathing and heart rate are slowed. Brain activity slows and eye movement stops.

In **stage three**, muscle tone, pulse, and breathing rate decrease even more. It is thought that many restorative functions occur at this stage that support recovery and growth. It is also linked to memory and creativity.

The **fourth stage** is REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. People in REM sleep show brain activity similar to those who are awake. Yet, during this stage the body experiences atonia, or temporary paralysis. REM sleep is essential for memory, creativity, and learning, and is also when we experience the most vivid dreams.

Ideally, we sleep long enough and well enough to cycle through the stages four to six times.



Let's Explore How to Improve Our Sleep Habits:

- **Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day** and allow enough time to get at least 7 hours of sleep. If you must vary this schedule on the weekends or days off, try to keep the difference to no more than an hour. This helps set and maintain your body's sleep-wake rhythm.
- **Develop a wind-down routine.** Spend the last hour before bed off screens. Read, listen to relaxing music or a podcast, do a puzzle, or take a hot shower.



- **Avoid caffeine and nicotine, which are both stimulants, before bed.** Even things like soda and chocolate have enough caffeine to keep you awake, so avoid them after late afternoon. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but it will wake you up later in the night, so avoid it, too.
- **Spend time outside, especially in the sunlight.** The sun helps set your body's natural circadian rhythms. When you get up in the morning, try to get some sunshine as soon as possible, especially in the winter months when daylight hours are short. Walk the dog, drink your coffee on the patio, even sitting by a window in the sun can help you set your internal clock.
- **Make your bedroom conducive to sleep.** The bedroom should be quiet, dark, and cool. If you need to, use things like black-out curtains, sleep masks, white noise machines, and ear plugs. Most people sleep best in a room that is between 60-65°F. The body temperature drops during sleep, and it needs to stay that way for us to sleep deeply and well. Taking a hot shower or bath before bed may help because it may cause a temporary rise and then drop in body temperature, prompting us to fall asleep.
- **Avoid heavy meals before bed, but don't go to bed hungry.** Heavy, spicy foods can cause indigestion that keeps us awake. However, if your stomach is rumbling you will also have trouble sleeping. Have a small bedtime snack (see page 3 for some suggestions) if you are hungry before bed.
- **Get regular exercise, but not right before bed.** Exercise can help tire us out and improve our sleep, but some studies show that exercising in the hours before bed can make it harder to fall asleep.

Continued on page 3

The Importance of Sleep (continued)

If you are practicing all of these healthy sleep habits and still struggle to get a good night's sleep, there are some additional tools you can consider:

- Many people opt for prescription medication to help them sleep, but these can have side effects and may interact with other medicines. Many cause day-time drowsiness, and some cause sleep-eating and sleep-driving, which can be dangerous. In addition, they don't treat the underlying problem, may be addictive, and are not intended for long term use.
- There are alternative sleep aids that may be effective for many people. Chamomile is an herb that has long been used for its calming effects. According to the National Institutes of Health, chamomile is widely regarded as a mild tranquilizer and sleep inducer, possibly due to a flavonoid it contains that binds to benzodiazepine receptors in the brain. Some animal studies also show that it can induce sleep. For best results, brew several tea bags or have several cups of chamomile tea before bed. Don't use chamomile while pregnant as it may also stimulate uterine contractions.



- Melatonin is a naturally occurring hormone that regulates sleep. Produced by the pineal gland, melatonin normally begins to rise in the evenings and stays high throughout the night, prompting us to fall and stay asleep. However, disrupted light-dark cycles, aging, and being overweight may disrupt melatonin production, leading to sleep issues. Melatonin is found in small amounts in some foods, and it can also be taken as a supplement. It is considered generally safe for most people. Studies show it may help you fall asleep and stay asleep longer. However, it may cause drowsiness so it should not be taken before driving or other dangerous activity. In addition, it may interact with other medications like birth control pills, immunosuppressants, diabetes medications, and anticoagulants so talk to your

doctor before taking melatonin supplements, and don't take it if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

- Valerian is a tall, flowering grass plant and its root has been used as an herbal remedy for insomnia since the times of ancient Greece and Rome. It can be found in tea, supplement, and tincture forms. Some studies show that taking valerian root over a period of time can improve sleep, but other studies show it to be no more effective than a placebo. It may interact with other drugs, increase the effect of other sleep aids, & increase the sedative effect of some medications, so use it with care. As with many herbal and alternative remedies, it has not been extensively tested so it should not be used by people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, but is generally considered safe for short-term use for most adults.
- There are also a variety of foods that may help with sleep. Melatonin is found in small amounts in some foods, such as milk, fish, sour cherries, nuts, oats, bananas, eggs, and rice. Foods that contain tryptophan may be beneficial because tryptophan is used by the body to make melatonin and serotonin. Tryptophan-rich foods include turkey, honey, dairy, eggs, bananas, nuts and seeds. Vitamin B6 is also needed to make melatonin, so foods like bananas, chickpeas, whole grains, and fortified cereals, which are rich in B6, may aid sleep. Bananas are also high in potassium and magnesium, which help with muscle relaxation and may therefore ease restless legs. Sour cherries contain both melatonin and tryptophan and may promote sleep. In one study, elderly adults with insomnia drank 2 eight-ounce glasses of tart cherry juice a day and slept almost 90 minutes more at night.

The next time you have trouble sleeping, try one of the following suggestions as a bedtime snack:

- ◆ Chamomile tea with honey
- ◆ Low fat yogurt with sliced banana or dried cherries
- ◆ Whole grain cereal or oatmeal with low fat milk & banana slices
- ◆ Slice of whole grain bread with cheese
- ◆ Glass of low-fat milk with handful of nuts & dried cherries
- ◆ Bowlful of tart cherries or a glass of cherry juice

For more information on sleep, catch the next Health & Wellness In-service on October 8 at 2:30pm on Zoom!

The NOVA Classification System: A Novel Way to Examine Your Food Choices

By some estimates, 70% of the food available to consumers in the United States is considered ultra-processed. Consumption of ultra-processed food is associated with a myriad of health risks, including increased risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. **It is easy to tell people to eat unprocessed food, but what does that really mean?** Government agencies publish guides like the Food Pyramid and My Plate that classify foods into groups based on similarities, or how often they should be consumed. But these are broad, vague groupings that leave a lot of wiggle room in terms of health and do not specify how or if these foods are processed in any way. When someone chooses beans as their plant-based protein source, are they choosing dried beans that they are cooking themselves, canned beans with added sodium, or baked beans which may be high in added sugar and sodium? A serving of fish could mean a piece of baked salmon, or a battered and fried fish fillet. A person may select vegetables in the form of a green salad, or fried onion rings. Both are servings of vegetables, but one is almost certainly healthier than the other.

Researchers at a Brazilian university devised a classification system called the NOVA food classification system. It was designed to help people classify foods based on the extent and purpose of the processing they undergo. Food is categorized into one of four categories.



Group 1: Unprocessed or minimally processed foods. These are naturally occurring foods that have no added salt, sugar, oils, or fats. Processing such as trimming unwanted parts, chopping, grinding, freezing, or pasteurization are all considered minimal processing. Examples include fresh or frozen vegetables, dried

grains such as rice or oats, fresh or frozen meat, poultry, and fish, eggs, pasta, dried beans, coffee, etc.



Group 2: Processed culinary ingredients. These foods have been extracted from natural foods by pressing, refining, grinding, or milling for use in cooking. These foods include oils, sugars, honey, butter, salt, and foods that are a combination of these, such as salted butter.



Group 3: Processed foods. These are food products made by adding sugar, oil and/or salt (Group 2) to create simple products from Group 1 foods with increased shelf life or enhanced taste. These foods include canned fruits, vegetables, and beans, tomato paste, canned fish, smoked or cured meats, salted or sugared nuts and seeds, cheese, and freshly made bread.

Continued on page 5

The NOVA Classification System (continued)



Group 4: Ultra-processed foods. These are foods that are made almost entirely from substances extracted from other foods and are considered “industrial formulations”. They may contain substances extracted and derived from oils, fats, starch, and protein like hydrogenated oils and modified starches. Other ingredients may be synthesized in laboratories such as flavor enhancers, colors, and other additives to make the food product hyper-palatable. It may be hard to identify what natural food (from Group 1) these products derived from. These include fatty, sweet, and salty packaged snacks, packaged cookies, soda, energy drinks, sweetened flavored yogurts, sweetened juices, pre-prepared meat, fish, vegetables, frozen pizza, prepackaged breads, and many breakfast cereals.

This classification system is not without its critics. Some call it overly strict or simplistic—for example, hummus made from ground chickpeas with the addition of guar gum as a stabilizer would be considered a Group 4 food, lumped in with soda and candy. Breakfast cereals which may be high in fiber and other nutrients are also categorized as Group 4 foods. Critics argue that it does not take into account the nutritional content of the food, and that is true. However, the NOVA classification system is a novel way to look at food that considers the modern food system and what people actually encounter in supermarkets today.

Understanding what happens to food before it is consumed is essential to selecting more natural, less processed foods. Combined with some basic nutrition knowledge and other food guides, it is another tool in our toolbox to decipher the myriad of food options we are faced with today.

Stay tuned for future articles exploring this classification system, the dangers of ultra-processed foods, and other tools such as apps to help you navigate food choices.

NOVA Food Classification System Examples

Group 1

Unprocessed or minimally processed foods

Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, grains, legumes, meat, fish, eggs, nuts & seeds.

Group 2

Processed culinary ingredients

Olive oil, coconut oil, butter, cream, maple syrup, sugar, honey and salt.

Group 3

Processed foods

Canned fruits and vegetables, canned fish, beer, wine, cheeses, and freshly baked bread.

Group 4

Ultra-processed foods

Burgers, pizza, ice-cream, sweet and savory packaged snacks, instant soups, chicken nuggets, and sugar sweetened beverages.

Spirituality Corner: Living Seasonally

Pumpkin spice lattes, leaves changing color, cooler temperatures, and earlier sunsets. These are some of the seasonal changes signaling the transition from summer into fall. As the earth rotates around the sun and as the moon orbits the earth, there are dependable rhythms and patterns throughout the year, including tides, weather patterns, and daylight.

When we try to live in alignment with nature's natural ebbs and flows, our bodies and health are more likely to thrive. We feel more mindful and connected with the earth when we eat local seasonal foods and engage in season-specific activities. If you are feeling out of balance, consider making adjustments to follow the foods or activities of the season to see what benefits it brings to your mood and health.



Fall (September, October November) is a time of harvest, pumpkin patches, cozy sweaters, storing, and Autumnal Equinox. It's a time to take stock, keep warm, strengthen our immunity, and prepare for the upcoming colder winter. Seasonal foods include squash, mushrooms, spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, as well as slow-cooked dishes and baked casseroles. Seasonal activities include group activities, volunteering, and community events.

Winter (December, January, February) is a time of warm coats, shorter days, celebration, peace, reflection, rest, and Winter Solstice. Seasonal foods include simmered soups, hearty stews, rich meats, holiday foods, and root vegetables. Seasonal activities include making plans, engaging our imagination, and pondering.

Spring (March, April, May) is a time of rain jackets, gardening, cleaning, birth, renewal, letting go of the old and welcoming the new, as well as Vernal Equinox.

Seasonal foods include leafy green vegetables, herbs, garlic, and onion. Seasonal activities include stretching, massage, and expanding our minds.

Summer (June, July, August) is a time of shorts, longer days, berry picking, being outside, activity, growth, and Summer Solstice. Seasonal foods include summer fruits and vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers, watermelon to cool and refresh the body, whole grains, and naturally sweet foods like corn and sweet potatoes. Seasonal activities include gentle movements like yoga, meditation, progressive relaxation, and core strength.

Just like in the song "Turn! Turn! Turn!" from The Byrds, everything has its season:

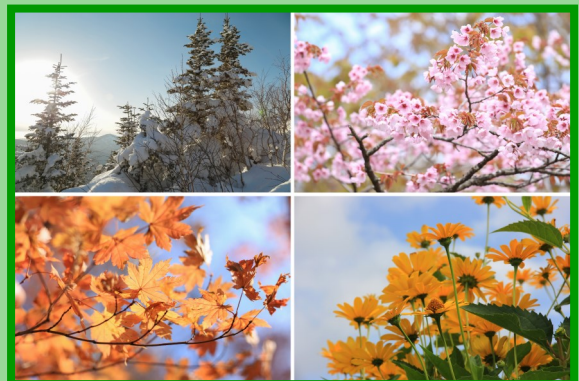
*To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven
A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones*

Live mindfully through each season and pay attention to what your body is craving and what you are feeling day to day to help you feel more rooted and present.

Resource and further reading: [Seasonal living for better health - WellBeing Magazine](#)

*This article was contributed by our Wellness Ambassador, **Erin Lubniewski**, Occupational Therapist at Crestwood Treatment Center Fremont.*

(If you are interested in becoming a Wellness Ambassador for your campus, please contact Margaret at mclayton@cbhi.net.)



Focaccia

Focaccia is a flat, leavened bread of Italian origin. It can be used as sandwich bread, a base for pizza, or as “table bread” to accompany dips, sauces, or as part of a meal. Focaccia is easy to make, and infinitely customizable. It has a short rise time and doesn’t need kneading, so it can be made with just a few hours’ notice and little to no baking skill. Focaccia can also be customized with different herbs, vegetables, and aromatics, and even decorated in visually beautiful ways. Rosemary and olive oil is a classic combination, but caramelized onions, parmesan cheese, roasted garlic, olives, tomatoes, fresh herbs and vegetables are all options. In some regions of Italy, focaccia may even contain raisins, nuts, and sugar or honey. Focaccia is truly a beautiful blank canvas, so experiment and enjoy!

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp yeast
- 1 cup room temperature or warm water
- Additional toppings as desired



In a bowl, add the flour. Add the salt and yeast on opposite sides of the bowl. If you are adding any herbs, spices, or sweeteners, mix them in. (Reserve any large ingredients as toppings.) Add the water and mix. The dough should be wet—if it is not, add a little water. Coat the dough in olive oil and let sit for at least 2 hours at room temperature. Alternatively, the dough can be placed in the fridge for up to 24 hours (this recipe is very accommodating!). When you are ready to bake, grease a baking pan with butter and olive oil. Again, this recipe is forgiving—you can use a 9x13 pan or a smaller pan, depending on how thick you want your focaccia to be. If you use a smaller pan, you should increase your cooking time by a few minutes so the interior of the focaccia is not too doughy. Add the dough to the pan and let proof an additional 30 minutes. While the dough is proofing, heat the oven to 425 degrees. Press the dough down into the pan with your fingertips, leaving little holes or impressions. Coat your toppings generously with olive oil to prevent burning. Arrange the toppings evenly on top of the dough. Bake for about 25 minutes or until lightly browned.

Any Health and Wellness News Questions?

Contact Margaret M. Clayton, M.S. at:
mclayton@cbhi.net

*“If thou
tastest a
crust of bread,
thou tastest
all the stars
and all the
heavens.”*

**-Robert
Browning**