



HEALTHWISE

News to enrich your lifestyle

Spring 2015

Do You Suffer from Seasonal Allergies?

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases estimates that more than 50 million Americans suffer from allergic diseases, and that allergies are the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in United States. Allergies arise from loss of the body's natural resistance to allergens. Allergens are substances that in some people the immune system recognizes as "foreign" or "dangerous," but these same substances cause no response for most people. An allergen can be almost anything as long as it provokes an allergic response in a person.

If the onset of symptoms is rather sudden and these same symptoms occur at the same time every year, it is usually the result of a seasonal allergy. Symptoms of allergies appear very quickly after being exposed

to the allergen. Your immune system reacts when it encounters a certain substance, because it mistakenly thinks that substance is "dangerous" to you.

Seasonal allergies are caused by pollen and spores. They can occur at any time of the year, but frequently they start in early spring through the end of May, when the primary cause is windborne tree pollen. This is followed by grass through mid-July and ragweed from late summer until the first frost. Mold spores typically peak in mid-summer and last until temperatures begin to drop. The problems are complicated by pollen and spores carried into your home on clothes or through open windows. More recently, adult-onset allergies seem to have increased, in theory because the less you have been exposed to allergens, the more



vulnerable you become to them.

How can I reduce the effects of seasonal allergies?

- ◆ Take off your shoes as soon as you enter the house to avoid spreading allergens.
- ◆ Keep your home and car windows closed, and run the air conditioner to keep cool.
- ◆ Avoid mowing the lawn, keep away from freshly cut grass, and try to make outdoor exposure limited on windy days.
- ◆ Know the pollen count for your allergen and stay indoors when it is high.

Treatment of seasonal allergies can include over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines, nasal steroid spray, decongestants, as well as alternative treatments. Many of the medications have ingredients that can elevate your blood pressure and heart rate, so it's medically important to ensure they are appropriate for you. I encourage you to discuss your symptoms with me.

Check Your Symptoms

Symptoms of allergies and colds can be similar, but here is a general guide of some distinctions:

Colds		Allergies
Occurrence of symptoms:	Symptoms often appear one at a time: first sneezing, then a runny nose, then congestion.	Symptoms occur all at once.
Duration of symptoms:	Generally last from seven to 10 days.	Continue as long as a person is exposed to the allergy-causing agent (allergen).
Mucus:	Often a yellowish nasal discharge, due to an infection.	Generally a clear, thin, watery discharge.
Sneezing:	Less frequent than with allergies.	More frequent than with colds, especially when sneezing occurs two or three times in a row.
Fever:	May be accompanied by a fever.	Not usually associated with a fever.
Contagious:	Can be spread to others	Not contagious

From the desk of Daniel R. Jasper, MD

Dear Patient:

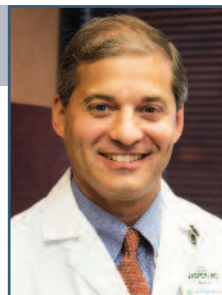
Welcome to spring, the best time to start relishing the pleasures of longer, sunnier days outside...but not without a good night's sleep. Research shows one third of American adults struggle with restless nights and drowsy days, and we are all logging two fewer hours each night than our ancestors. We'll explain why the restorative power of sleep is essential at every age and share tips to ensure a restful night.

Do you have seasonal allergies? Many people do – and how do you know if you have a spring cold or a seasonal allergy? Hopefully the article focusing on seasonal allergies will illuminate the differences.

Finally, we hope you will try our quick guide to ordering the healthiest options when dining out at your favorite ethnic restaurant. Whether you're seeking new tastes, or prefer tried-and-true dishes, we'll help you make the right choices. Bon appetit!

Wishing you good health,

Daniel R. Jasper, MD



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Eyes Wide Shut: Why Eight Hours of Sleep is a Prescription for Better Health

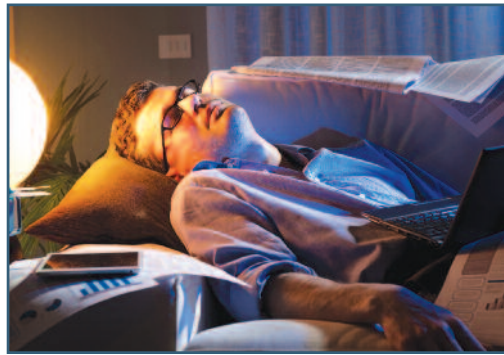
In today's time-pressed world, a full night's sleep has become akin to a luxury, but beware: it is a vital necessity. Lack of sleep affects your health, from stress to heart disease to overall well-being. Even an occasional all-nighter impedes our ability to concentrate, analyze information, and significantly, to drive, making sleepiness at the wheel the cause of over 100,000 car accidents each year.

Call it a by-product of our increasingly hectic lifestyle: we now sleep two hours less nightly than our ancestors, and in just the last decade, another 38 minutes has been shaved off. Despite the fact that at least seven to nine hours of sleep is recommended for the average individual under 65, and for over 65, an average seven to eight hours, 40 percent of adults report sleeping less than six hours nightly. Additionally, between 50 and 70 million adults suffer from some sort of sleep disorder, with one in three saying they had trouble falling or staying asleep, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

To sleep, perchance to dream...

To understand why these numbers concern the medical community, consider how critical sleep is to human functioning. Many essential physiological activities that aid digestion, cell and tissue repair and growth, muscle growth, protein synthesis and release of growth hormone occur mostly, or sometimes only, during sleep. Sleep also regulates the hormones epinephrine, dopamine and serotonin, which are closely linked to mood and behavior.

The rejuvenating power of sleep is most evident during REM (rapid eye movement). This deepest, last, and most important phase accounts for 25 to 30 percent of the sleep cycle, when dreaming occurs. At this point, the learning region of the brain is stimulated, new neuronal connections are formed and proteins



associated with aging and neural degeneration are eliminated. For example, one expert theory states the production of adenosine in brain cells remains high during wakefulness, but promotes the "drive to sleep." Once the body has a chance to clear adenosine from the system during sleep, we wake feeling rested and more alert.

What happens when the body is regularly deprived of life-sustaining sleep? It's enough to keep you more awake at night, with research pointing to the potential for: more frequent colds; irritability; lower quality of life; elevated blood pressure which can increase the risk of kidney disease; decreased insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance (diabetes); impaired pancreatic cell responsiveness; calcification of coronary arteries (heart disease and stroke); mood disorders (anxiety and depression); and obesity (lower levels of appetite-controlling hormone, leptin, and higher levels of ghrelin, which tends to make people ravenous). The immune system is particularly affected, as production of proteins needed by the body to fight infections and inflammation decreases.

Sleep easy

Reassuringly, an extra 15 to 30 minutes of sleep each

night can make a significant difference in overall health and quality of life. Sleep specialists offer these tips:

- **Disconnect.** Sixty percent of Americans bring electronic devices along for the night. "We can't resist the stimulation," says *Sleepless in America* director John Hoffman. "It's exceeding anything that we were designed to experience...it's keeping us up beyond what we're designed for." Turn off phones, tablets and TV one hour before sleep time.

- **Avoid alcohol before bedtime.** Trickier than caffeine, alcohol typically makes it easier to fall asleep but the sleep is of poorer quality. Most people will fall asleep sooner, but spend less time in REM sleep and consequently wake up feeling less refreshed.

- **Adjust your bedroom environment** by decreasing light, noise and temperature so that you are comfortable for the night.

- **Avoid discussing emotional issues or exercising right before bed,** both of which can cause the body to secrete the stress hormone cortisol, associated with alertness.

- **Try mindful meditation.** Focusing on breathing and remaining in the present moment was found to improve sleep quality in older adults with moderate sleep disturbance, according to *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

- **Reset your body clock.** Frequent travelers and seniors are at particular risk for sleeping problems, including advanced sleep phase syndrome, which causes earlier than normal sleepiness and too-early wake up the next morning. Using specialized light boxes before bed or taking melatonin, the "sleep hormone," have proven effective in readjusting circadian rhythms.

Still can't get a good night's sleep? Please call my office.



Nutrition Corner

Choose This, Not That... a Smart Eating Series

Healthy eating need not mean deprivation, but simply opting for better choices on the menu, around the grocery aisles and in your kitchen. In this first of a series, we offer smart swaps for dining out on today's favorite ethnic cuisines. We'll continue with a look at healthy substitutes for your own table in the next *HealthWise*.

ORDER THIS	AVOID THAT
MEXICAN	
Gazpacho; Jicama	Fried tortilla chips
Vegetable-filled burritos, tamales	Meat quesadillas—tortilla filled with meat and cheese and fried
Chicken or fish fajitas—marinated protein grilled with onions, green peppers, lettuce, diced tomatoes with a soft corn tortilla	Flautas—crisp tortillas with shredded meat, sauce Chimichangas—fried tortillas with meat and cheese and tomato sauce Burritos—flour tortillas with beans or meat, tomato sauce, shredded cheese Taco salad
Black or pinto beans, Spanish rice	Refried beans
Tofu, grilled chicken breast, fish or shrimp fillings	Chorizo (sausage), carnitas (pork)
Salsa, pico de gallo, cilantro, low-fat sour cream, jalapeno peppers	Cheese, sour cream, guacamole sides, con queso dip
Light Mexican beer, glass of wine	Margaritas
CHINESE	
Hot and sour soup, wonton soup	Egg drop soup

Sources: *Healthy Dining Finder*, AHA, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

ORDER THIS	AVOID THAT
CHINESE (cont.)	
Vegetable spring rolls, steamed dumplings, lettuce wraps Vegetable stir fries: broccoli, mushrooms, Chinese eggplant, cabbage, green onions, bean sprouts, bok choy, snap peas, water chestnuts	Fried egg rolls, fried dumplings Dishes with fried meats, peanuts, cashews, crispy noodles
Low-sodium soy sauce, sweet and sour sauce, plum sauce	Lobster, bean or oyster sauce, regular soy sauce
Steamed brown rice, edamame	Fried rice, lo mein noodles, crab rangoons
ITALIAN	
Roasted peppers, minestrone soup	Fried calamari
Pasta primavera	Fettucini Alfredo
Marsala and piccata dishes; grilled chicken or fish herb-brushed with extra virgin olive oil	Scallopine or parmigiana dishes—floured, fried and baked with cheese
Marsala, marinara, and clam sauces	Butter or cream sauces, such as Alfredo
Pizza with spinach, mushrooms, broccoli, roasted pepper toppings	Pizza with pepperoni, sausage, extra cheese toppings
GREEK	
Hummus with pita	Saganaki—fried cheese
Tzatziki sauce—cucumber and Greek yogurt	Skordalia, mashed potatoes and garlic dip
Souvlaki—grilled meat skewers with	Gyros sandwiches
Dolmades—grape leaves stuffed with ground meat and vegetables	Avegolemono—lemony chicken orzo soup thickened with eggs
Briam—roasted vegetables	Mousaka—vegetables and meat in cream sauce
Stifado stew—meat and onions in wine sauce	Pastitsio—Greek lasagna
Lamb or fish with steamed vegetables	