

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Hepatitis

The nation's "silent epidemic" of hepatitis threatens to ruin the health of millions of Americans and overwhelm the liver transplant system even further. Many of the 4 million people estimated to carry hepatitis don't even know it. Many more engage in risky behaviors that can transmit the virus — from body piercing and tattooing to unprotected sex and intravenous drug use. And anyone who received a blood transfusion before 1992 is at risk, too.

To help the public understand how they can help themselves or their loved ones avoid or cope with hepatitis infection, the University of Michigan Health System will hold a Hepatitis Awareness Night 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 8, in Room 100 of Ypsilanti High School, 2096 Packard Road, Ypsilanti.

Drs. Anna Lok and Robert Fontana, UMHS hepatitis specialists, will discuss who's at risk, how to find out if you have the disease, and what might happen to those who have it. They'll also present an update of the latest treatments and clinical trials.

For more information, call (734) 615-0158.

The sneezin' season

Suffering from sniffles, sneezes and nasal drips? How do you know if it's a late-winter head cold or the beginning of spring allergies?

According to Dr. Edward Zoratti, head of Allergy and Clinical Immunology at Henry Ford Health System, there are some basic guidelines to help distinguish allergies from a cold or sinus infection.

Allergies: Nasal mucus tends to be clear; no fever is present; symptoms are more recurrent and more persistent over a several-week period and improve with prescription or over-the-counter antihistamine decongestants.

Common cold: Nasal mucus is cloudy or discolored; fever may be present; symptoms improve over a week; symptoms are responsive to over-the-counter decongestants such as Sudafed. Antihistamines have little effect.

The timing of symptoms onset also helps an allergy specialist determine the culprit. Trees begin budding in March and continue to bud through mid-May. Just about that time, grass allergies set in and last through July. Reprinted from Henry Ford Health News

Menopause

Women's Health Services of Saint Joseph Mercy Health System's Ann Arbor will present *Preparing for Menopause* 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 8, at the Saint Joseph Mercy Canton Health Center, 1600 S. Canton Center Road in Canton.

The program is geared for women aged 35 to 50. The session will include a comprehensive overview of the physical and emotional changes, symptoms and health risks associated with menopause and how to best prepare for and manage them.

Preparing for Menopause is one of three sessions in the *SMHS Menopause Management Series* held at the SJM Canton Health Center. *Lifestyle Strategies for the Menopause Years* will be held Tuesday, May 22. *Treatment Options: Hormone Replacement and Complementary Therapies* will be held Tuesday, June 5.

The cost for each session is \$5 and registration is required. Call 1-800-231-2211.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information (including Medical Database (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsletters (upcoming events), News in the medical field, and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies)). We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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Tired Teens

Busy high school schedules leave little sleep time

BY RENEE SKOGLUND

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Like most teens, Kate Keim, 16, and Samantha Juras, 17, of Canton never get enough sleep. They know they should go to bed earlier, especially on school nights, but ...

"Everybody I know goes to bed late, everybody," said Keim, a junior at Salem High School. "Do the sleep experts go to bed early? No, I don't think so."

Staying awake in classes is often difficult, and first hour at 7:15 a.m. can be real killer, said Juras, a junior at Canton High School. "You fall asleep in classes. Even if teachers hit you with an eraser, you don't wake up."

"Everybody in first hour is out of it," said Keim.

The problem is a serious one. It's about more than sleepy teens nodding off in class. Sleep deprivation can be a matter of life and death. Drowsiness or fatigue has been identified as the principal 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 (NHTSA, 1994). Drivers age 25 or younger cause more than one-half of all fall-asleep crashes, reports the NHTSA.

Being an increased risk of unintentional injury and death, studies show that sleep deprivation in teens is associated with low grades and poor school performance, negative moods and the increased likelihood of stimulant use, including caffeine, nicotine and alcohol. And the more responsibilities a teen has in school and the community, the greater the risk of negative effects from lack of sleep.

Unfortunately, American teens' busy schedules of early morning classes, sports, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, and social activities — "You have to see your friends," said Juras — are often at odds with their biological clocks, which are set at going to bed later and getting up later than children and adults.

Biological clock

"When you become a teen, your sleep need goes up, but at the same time your schedule demands less sleep," said Dr. Ronald Chervin, director of the Michael S. Aldrich Sleep Disorders Laboratory and assistant professor of neurology at the University of Michigan Hospital.

Our biological clock, or circadian system — the metabolic, glandular and sleep rhythms associated with the 24-hour cycles of the earth's rotation — is timed according to the day's light-dark cycle. However, while adults may fall asleep around 10 p.m. and wake up refreshed at 6 or 7 a.m., studies show that the typical high school student's natural time to fall asleep is 11 p.m. or later. And, with a sleep need of nine or 10 hours, teens are not exactly bright-eyed and ready to begin their day at 7 a.m.

"It feels like your whole body is screaming for sleep," said Juras.

"Any hour of the day, if I lie down, I'm out. Sometimes I take a five-minute nap in class," said Keim.

There's a reason for this early-morning mind fog.

"Teenagers appear to be slightly 'phase-delayed,' meaning there's a shift to going to bed later and getting up later," said Dr. Tim Roehrs, research director for Henry Ford Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center.

Although sleep researchers know that sleep need is biologically and genetically determined, they don't know what part of the brain controls our need for sleep. "We used to think sleep need did not change throughout a lifespan. That is not clear yet. The teen years may be one of those exceptions," he said.

Changing a sleep pattern is difficult, he added. "When you try to sleep out of your biological clock rhythm, your sleep is not as good. It's more fragmented."

The average total sleep time during the school week decreases from 7 hours, 42 minutes for 13-year-olds to 7 hours, 4 minutes for 19-year-olds, according to Adolescent Sleep Needs and Patterns, a comprehensive report published by the National Sleep Foundation. Only 15 percent of adolescents surveyed reported sleeping 8.5 or more hours on school nights, and 26 percent reported sleeping 6.5 hours or less.

Compared to other teens, Keim and Juras's lives are not over-scheduled. Keim works 18 hours a week at Bill Knapp's and takes care of her horse, Rocky, two weekdays and on Saturdays. Juras, who lives with Keim's family, takes dance lessons two days a week and private voice lessons once a week. Yet, both girls seldom make to bed before 11:30 p.m., and they seldom manage more than six hours of sleep during the week.

"If I had eight hours, I'd be sleepy but functional," said Keim. "I need 10-11 hours. That's what I do on weekends."

Making up sleep time

Adequate sleep time is based upon how alert you are the following day. "You can't get five hours of sleep one day and then get 10 hours and expect to be fine the next day. We don't recuperate that quickly," said Chervin.



Dr. Tim Roehrs, research director for Henry Ford Hospital's Sleep Disorders Center.



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HERSCHMANN

Needing ZZZZZs: Samantha Juras, 17, left, provides a shoulder to lean on for her friend Kate Keim, 16. Both were suffering the effects of jet lag after returning from a California vacation.

Crashing on the weekends is not always the solution, he added. "A month of sleep deprivation takes more than three nights of normal sleep."

In tests involving people who were sleep-deprived, Roehrs discovered that when the subjects' sleep hours were increased from eight to 10 hours, they slept 95 percent of the time. As they gradually recovered from sleep deprivation, they slept 85 percent of the time. In one week, the subjects leveled off at 8.3 hours of sleep.

Because teenagers' circadian rhythms are so sensitive to erratic schedules — weekdays vs. weekends, job shift changes, to effectively adjust them requires making gradual, persistent and consistent changes, any researchers. Adapting to an early school schedule after summer or any vacation during which later hours are kept can take from several days to several weeks.

(For anyone traveling to a different time zone, it takes one day to adjust to every hour of sleep change, said Roehrs. So, if you're flying to California, count on a three-day adjustment.) Naps help, said Roehrs. "For teens, this is probably a little more easily done than with adults. Nap 30 minutes to an hour as long as you finish the nap within three-four hours of when you want to go to bed."

Can you really make up for dose of heavy-duty sleep deprivation?

"No!" said Juras. "It's not like something you can put into your bank," said Keim.

Schools need educating about teen sleep needs

Nancy Bitzarakis, a high school nurse in the Plymouth-Canton School District, said sleep deprivation among teenagers is an issue for several reasons, including after-school jobs and extracurricular activities.

"Their schedules are packed, and that contributes to fatigue. They are as booked as adults are."

But the main reason for adolescent fatigue? "They stay up late on the weekends, and then on Monday, they face that time adjustment all over again," said Bitzarakis.

The National Sleep Foundation suggests school systems can positively influence adolescents' sleep more by educating teachers and school health providers to recognize the physical and emotional effects of adolescent sleep deprivation; integrating sleep-related education in the curricula, including driver's education; and establishing later start times for high school classes.

Bitzarakis said a Canton High School student recently conducted a survey about sleep deprivation and school start times involving 20 students and six teachers. Five of the six teachers reported their first-hour students were sleepier, and 80 percent of the students said they would do better if school started later.

However, changing the school start times is not so easy. For most school dis-

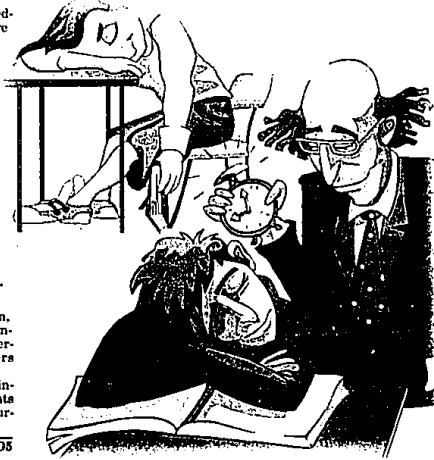
tricts, start times are related to bus schedules. Elementary school-age children are the last to be picked up because parents don't want them waiting for the bus in the dark. Also, many buses are scheduled for after-school activities, said Bitzarakis.

And there are other community concerns. "Child care is an issue for some parents. They need an older sibling at home when a younger sibling comes home from elementary school. It's a bigger issue than some people think," said William Camp, executive director for secondary education, Wayne-Westland School District.

Wayne-Westland high school classes begin at 7:20 a.m. "Some students like the early start time. They prefer to come to school early and get the day over," said Camp.

A lot has to do with student motivation, he added. "Some teachers say their morning classes are dynamic and their afternoon classes lethargic. Other teachers report the reverse."

The school day now starts later in Minnesota, and the results are good. Students reported feeling more alert and rested dur-



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