



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Beth Toal
Phone: (208) 381-2002
toalb@slrmc.org

TROUBLE SLEEPING IN THIS HEAT?

Recommendations to Protect Americans from Sleep Loss Due to Heat

Boise, ID (August 16, 2006) – As much of the nation struggles to stay cool during record-breaking temperatures, falling asleep and staying asleep can be extremely challenging, especially for those without air conditioning. The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) and the Idaho Sleep Disorders Center at St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center are issuing recommendations to avoid sleep loss and exhaustion during periods of excessive heat.

“Finding the ideal sleep environment during periods of high temperatures can be difficult. However, getting a good night's sleep is important for maintaining energy and focus during the day,” said Dr. Brett Troyer of the Idaho Sleep Center. “Inadequate sleep can affect productivity at work or home, personal relationships, overall health, and even your ability to drive safely.”

The NSF and the Idaho Sleep Disorders Center recommends taking the following steps to beat the heat and get a good night's sleep:

Avoid excessive heat build up in your body. Avoid hyperthermia (heat stroke) by reducing your activities, drinking plenty of water (including drinks that replace electrolytes), by finding cool, shady places to stay during the times of highest temperatures, and by taking baths in cool water. Children, older adults and those who are ill or taking medications may be more affected by heat and extra precautions should be taken to avoid hyperthermia.

Allow time for your body to cool down after physical activity or exercise. Falling and staying asleep requires the body to lower its internal temperature. This natural process may take longer after physical activity, so try to complete such activities several hours before bedtime.

Take steps to prevent excessive heat build-up in your home and bedroom. Use blinds to keep out sunlight during the daytime, and keep windows tightly closed if the temperature outside is hotter than indoors. Leave windows open at nighttime when the temperature drops, and use a fan to circulate cool air if you don't have air conditioning.

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Wear light clothing. Light cotton pajamas, shorts or t-shirts may help prevent you from overheating at night. Choose bed clothing made from fabric designed to wick away (draw away) moisture.

Take a shower or bath before going to bed. A cool shower can help reduce the temperature of your skin and give you a better feeling, but it may not help reduce your core body temperature, the factor associated with sleep onset. Sleep experts advise that warm/hot baths completed at least an hour before bedtime have been shown to improve sleep under normal conditions, but there is insufficient evidence to know whether hot water, helps when it is hot outside or in the home.

Create lower temperatures in the sleeping area to aid sleep. Cooler temperatures aid sleep so sleep in the coolest room in the house (it may be the basement), use a room air conditioner or if necessary use a lower thermostat setting at night.

Maintain consistent sleep and wake times. Sleep often and as long as possible in your usual night time pattern. If the heat gets to you during the day, limit napping to early afternoon.

Avoid hot and heavy meals, particularly near bedtime. Try to eat cool refreshing foods that replace lost water like fruits and vegetables. Avoid coffee and excessive use of caffeine, particularly in the afternoon or evening.

The National Sleep Foundation is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public health and safety by achieving understanding of sleep and sleep disorders, and by supporting education, sleep-related research, and advocacy. NSF is based in Washington, DC.

St. Luke's works with the NSF as a Community Sleep Awareness Partner to educate people in the Treasure Valley about the importance of sleep and the treatment of sleep disorders. For more information, visit www.stlukesonline.org or Call St. Luke's at 381-1200.

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