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EXTENSION

IS MY CHILD GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

By Sylvia Davis, Baker/Mitchell County

You may have heard of sleep disorders in adults, but children can suffer too. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute reports that children and teens both need about 9 hours of sleep per night. When they fail to get this amount consistently, they develop what is known as “sleep debt.”

With sleep debt, children and teens have decreases in performance, concentration, reaction time and ability to organize new information at home and school. They are more likely to forget things, have an accident or be injured, and exhibit behavior and mood problems. Some children have actually been diagnosed with Attention Deficient Disorder when in reality they were just not getting enough sleep. Inadequate sleep can negatively affect their grades, their skill at sports and their relationships with others.

Your child may have a sleep disorder if they

- Snore loudly, often or all the time
- Stop breathing for short periods while sleeping
- Have problems staying awake during the day



Talk to your family doctor or pediatrician if your child has these symptoms.

Even if a child does not have a formal sleep disorder, he may just not be getting enough sleep. Here are some tips that may help your child sleep better:

- Set a regular bedtime and stick to it, even on weekends.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine, such as a warm bath or reading a bedtime story. Television right before bed often is too stimulating.
- Encourage quiet, relaxing activities after supper. Too much high energy activity near bedtime can keep a child awake.
- Avoid big meals near bedtime.
- Stop the caffeine at least 6 hours before bedtime. That includes soft drinks, tea and chocolate.
- Keep the bedroom at a comfortable temperature.
- Darken the room. If the child is afraid, use a small nightlight.
- Keep the noise level low.



The Balancing Act

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CHILDREN & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

By La Keisha Levi, Houston County

Parents, do you feel like you are the one headed back to school? It can be overwhelming with all of the purchases and readying clothes, shoes and school supplies for the new school year. Focus this year as the time to become involved through creating a home environment that encourages learning and helps to set realistic expectations for your children’s academics. Parents set the tone for achievement in school and how tasks can be efficiently organized and tackled. Become more involved in their school--as the benefits of being more involved as a family help in reaching better grades, test scores, and increase the desire and motivation toward attending school. Children tend to have a positive attitude about school, which improves in behavior and less disciplinary problems. When parents are more involved at the school with the teachers one can establish a communication line between the parent and the teacher which keeps the parent up to date on progress with the child and helps in understanding both weaknesses and strengths of the child.

Being involved can be beneficial for the parent because it can improve their perception of the school and increase stronger ties and commitment within the school. If you have a teenage child who is going to middle school or high school, then being involved can make the transition easier and one will find that students are less likely to drop out of school. When engaging on this level of involvement in the schools for your children, then you will feel more confident in your own parenting and decision-making skills which allows more positive reinforcement and less punishment to be needed. A successful year starts with parents as children tend to mimic their attitudes and approach.

WEATHERIZING FOR WINTER: DO I REALLY NEED TO CHECK THAT?

By Kathryn Holland, Colquitt County

Winter will be here soon. A good practice to check your home and prepare it for winter when we spend the majority of time indoors. Here are some things to check as you weatherize your home. See our Home Maintenance checklist to help guide your preparations.

Clean Gutters and downspouts. Ensure water discharges 2-3 feet away from the house.

Check Flashing and the roof for loose connections or missing shingles and repair as needed.

Turn off the water supply to exterior water faucets, disconnect and drain hoses.

If temperatures drop cover faucets with faucet caps to prevent pipes freezing.

Check weather-stripping on windows and doors. Clean storm windows and replace broken/damaged windows. If you do not have storm windows insulate windows with window film. Use a candle

stick to check for leaks around doors and windows on a windy day. Caulk any leakage around doors and windows; see how to at <https://energy.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/E-ConDIYCaulking.pdf?fwd=no>



Install door sweeps or draft stoppers on exterior doors and windows if needed.

Inspect Septic systems and pump if needed. No one wants plumbing issues at Thanksgiving.

Check your Furnace. Change air filters at least every three months; and more if you have pets. Clean supply/return covers. Check duct work and seal loose connections and leaks with duct mastic. For loose connections or holes work with your HVAC contractor. Have a professional clean duct work if needed.

Check insulation in the attic and add more if needed. Seal holes with foam board and leaks with caulk or expanding foam. Seal the attic access with an insulated airtight cover.

Cover window mounted air conditioners if you cannot remove them. These covers are reusable and inexpensive.

Keep yourself and your family warm and safe by preparing in advance for cold weather.

References:

1. UGA Home Maintenance Checklist https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/C%201082_2.PDF

What Does Your Credit Say About You?

By Christine Odom, Colquitt County

What do you do when someone asks to borrow money from you? Your decision about whether or not to lend will likely be based upon your perception of that individual's character, among other things. Instead of gut reactions and informal agreements, the world of credit relies upon formal agreements that are regulated by the federal government. Credit Reporting Agencies (CRAs) collect information about you from financial institutions, court documents, public records, and other entities. The CRA file about you is your credit report. Your credit report documents the Five C's of credit, Character, Capacity, Collateral, Capital and Conditions, as they relate to you and is the basis for your credit score. Understanding how your credit report is compiled and used is essential.

What's on Your Credit Report?

- Personal Information including your name, current and previous addresses, employers, Social Security Number, telephone number and date of birth.
- Credit History including credit accounts opened in your name. For each account, your credit file includes the creditor's name, your account number, how much you borrowed, the amount still owed, your credit limit, dates the account were opened, updated, or closed, and your repayment history.
- Inquiries are documented any time someone requests access to your credit file.
- Public Records include tax liens, bankruptcies and court judgement. Criminal records are NOT included in this report.



How Do I Get My Credit Report?

As a U.S. Resident you are entitled to one free credit report every year from EACH of the three major CRAs (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion). Request your first free copy online (www.annualcreditreport.com) or toll free (1-877-322-8228). Establishing, maintaining, and protecting your good credit can save you thousands of dollars over time.

BREAKFAST: FUELS YOUR DAY

By Rachel Hubbard, Lainer County

Does your morning routine consist of rushing to get ready so you won't be late to school or work? This is a way of life for many of us. One problem with this is that in our hurry, we might be tempted to skip breakfast. While all meals are important, breakfast can impact your entire day.

The word breakfast literally means breaking the fast. Your body has gone without food or fuel since the night before. Breakfast is the time to put in the nutrients your body needs to function. Eating this morning meal gives you more energy and jump starts your metabolism. If you are concerned about weight, eating breakfast everyday has been shown to help maintain a healthier weight. Eating breakfast helps with brain function, attention span, concentration and memory. It also can reduce irritability and tiredness. Studies show when students eat breakfast, they think better and have higher grades than students who skip breakfast.

Here are some tips to help you include this important meal:

- Get organized the night before.
- Keep it simple. Breakfast does not have to be complicated.
- Start with lean protein like an egg, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, or nuts.
- Add whole grains such as whole grain cereal, whole grain toast, a tortilla or oatmeal.
- Add fruit or vegetables including bananas, grapes, blueberries or chopped peppers.

Breakfast is an important meal for every member of your family. Taking a few minutes to fuel your body will give you a jump start on the day.



FOOD SAFETY TIP

By Roxie Price, Tift County

Summer days in south GA get real hot pretty quick. Picnics and barbeque with family and friends are fun times and make wonderful memories. If you are eating outside and away from home, make sure you store the leftover food in the correct manner as soon as the group is finished eating. No matter how Granny did it in the past, when we finish eating, we cannot throw the table cloth over our food and come back in a couple of hours to eat a snack or supper. Food must be stored properly to fight foodborne illnesses. Cold food should be held at 41 degrees fahrenheit or below and hot food held at 135 degrees fahrenheit or higher.

There have been several foodborne illness outbreaks caused by the food being stored at the wrong temperature for too long, especially in the summer months. Food that has been stored at the correct temperature can quickly rise to the danger zone, which is between 41 degrees fahrenheit and 135 degrees fahrenheit. When food is left in this temperature range, especially in the heat of the day, it can become unsafe to eat fast. Even if it taste fine, looks fine, and even smells fine, it can still be harmful.



Remember that young children and the elderly are at greater risk due to how our immune system works. Do not let your wonderful recipe make others sick due to incorrect storage of the food. Bring plenty of ice and coolers to store leftover food if you are away from home. Do not wrap food in tin foil to send home with others who may have a long ride ahead of them, unless they have a cooler with ice. Keep summer time picnics and barbeques enjoyable with food that is safe to eat. Let's make good memories.

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LEARNING FOR A LIFETIME

The Balancing Act: Your Current Issue Enclosed

Place Stamp Here

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension

The University of Georgia
 Cooperative Extension
 College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Athens, Georgia 30602

Dear Friends,

The Balancing Act is a publication sent to you by Family and Consumer Science Agents serving all of Southwest Georgia. All information in this newsletter is written by Specialist at UGA and FACS agents, and is backed by research from the University of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This newsletter brings you the latest information,
 please contact the agent in your county.

Thank you,

Sylvia Davis	Baker / Mitchell County	229-734-3015
Kathryn Holland	Colquitt County	229-616-7455
Becca Stackhouse	Crisp County	229-276-2612
Suzanne Williams	Dougherty County	229-436-7216
Ann Center	Early County	229-723-3072
La Keisha Levi	Houston County	478-987-2028
Rachel Hubbard	Lanier County	229-482-3895
Mitzi Parker	Sumter County	229-924-4476
Roxie Price	Tift County	229-391-7980
Kayla Wall	Quitman County	229-334-4303
Liz Singley	Stewart County	229-838-4908

**Contributing to
 this issue:**

Christine Odom
 Kathryn Holland
Colquitt County

Roxie Price
Tift County

Rachel Hubbard
Lainer County

Sylvia Davis
Baker/Mitchell County

La Keisha Levi
Houston County

Edited by:
*Becca Stackhouse
 Crisp County*