



## Ontario Home Economics Association

### *Ask a Professional Home Economist*

**For Immediate Release**

## **The Power of 8: Sleep for Health and Wellness**

By Michelle Kwan, BFA' (Hons), BAsC' Candidate

Do you wake up in the morning without feeling well rested?

Do you crave caffeine by mid-afternoon because of sleepiness and fatigue?

Do you take advantage of the weekends to catch up on poor sleeping patterns during the week?

These are all signs of not getting enough sleep. Canadian families are busy, and may be overlooking the importance of proper sleep habits for overall health. Sleep allows the body to rest and recharge for the next day. A lack of sleep can cause drowsiness, decreased memory, reduced concentration, and impaired physical performance. Drivers lacking in sleep put themselves and others at increased risk for car accidents. In addition, not getting enough sleep has been linked to several mental health disorders including depression and anxiety disorders. Sleep research is expanding and has become an area of interest amongst health researchers. There is increasing evidence linking the importance of sleep to mental and physical wellness.

Getting the proper amount of sleep, with at least **7 – 8 hours per night** is recommended for adults. Children and adolescents need more sleep for proper growth and development, and pregnant women are also advised to get more sleep. If you are questioning your need for sleep contact your health-care provider for professional advice.

Here are five tips to ensure a good night's rest:

- **Try to go to bed at the same time every night, even on weekends.** This helps to maintain proper circadian rhythms (the body's internal clock) and adjusts your body to its natural sleep cycle.
- **Stop drinking caffeine after 4:00 pm or at least six hours before going to bed.** Having too much caffeine in the afternoon can make it more difficult for you to fall asleep at night.

- **Exercise regularly.** Daily exercise of 30 – 60 minutes can help you sleep better at night. Try not to exercise too close to bed time, as you may find yourself too energized to fall asleep. Aim to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine at least 5 – 6 hours before bedtime.
- **Relax before bedtime.** Take a warm bath, read a book, or meditate to prepare your mind and body for sleep.
- **Don't lie in bed awake.** If you are having difficulty sleeping, get out of bed and do something else until you feel tired. Lying in bed awake can cause excessive worry and insomnia.

If you are still having difficulties getting to sleep after trying these tips, **speak to your health-care provider.**

Sleep is extremely important to overall health; our day to day rituals depend on a proper night's rest. Make sleep a priority in your life. Remember the power of 8 hours is the key to health, happiness and mental well-being!

For more information, visit: The Canadian Sleep Society: [www.canadiansleepsociety.com](http://www.canadiansleepsociety.com) or Mental Health Canada: [www.mentalhealthcanada.com](http://www.mentalhealthcanada.com)

**Michelle Kwan**, is a 3rd year School of Nutrition student at Ryerson University and the winner of the Ontario Home Economics Association Student Media Release Competition. The award was presented by OHEA's VP of Communications Erin McGregor, RD, P.H.Ec., at the OHEA Conference held at Ryerson on March 24, 2012.

Kwan earned a BFA' (Hons) in Visual Arts from York University before enrolling at Ryerson. Michelle's passion for food, nutrition and media has led her to various unique opportunities. She has served as Communications Director for the Nutrition Course Union and as the Communications & Social Media Coordinator for Critical Dietetics. Michelle is also a former Team Leader for Nutrition Health Promotion outreach teams and a Miss Universe Canada 2011 National Delegate. Looking ahead, Kwan plans to finish her degree and continue to follow her natural instinct to help people. OHEA congratulates Michelle on her win and looks forward to working with more student writers in the future.

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The Ontario Home Economics Association (OHEA), a self-regulating body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards amongst its members so they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life. OHEA is grateful for the support from the Gwenyth Bailey Simpson Communications Award from the Canadian Home Economics Foundation (CHEF).

**For further information or to speak to a Professional Home Economist, please contact:** Ontario Home Economics Association, 14 Totten Place, Woodstock, ON N4S 8G7 Email: [nancyohea@rogers.com](mailto:nancyohea@rogers.com) Website: [www.ohea.on.ca](http://www.ohea.on.ca)