

Heart & Stroke Presents...

Webinar Key Messages



Title: Sleep & Vascular Health

Webinar Date: April 21, 2020

Topics Covered in Webinar

Sleep health has many important direct and indirect influences on overall health and well-being, including the physical, mental, and cognitive domains. Sleep health is of particular importance in people who have stroke, heart conditions and vascular cognitive impairment, both as a risk factor and as a post-event outcome. This webinar reviewed the current scientific evidence, and clinical approaches to promoting sleep health and managing sleep related conditions in people with cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease.

View Sleep & Vascular Health [webinar here](#).

Please also refer to Heart & Stroke's [Sleep webpage here](#).

Dr. Mark Boulos, *Neurologist, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto*
Guidance from a Stroke and Sleep expert

Information on sleep apnea, risk factors and outcomes:

- Sleep apnea after a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA; also known as mini stroke) is common; 72% of people show signs of potential sleep apnea, post-stroke.
- Sleep apnea in people who have had a stroke and cardiovascular event is linked to poorer health outcomes:
 - Increased duration of hospitalization.
 - Decreased function and cognition.
 - Increased recurrent vascular events and mortality.
- Sleep apnea is an independent risk factor for stroke and cardiovascular events.
- It is recommended, that adults should sleep for 7-9 hours per night.
 - However, sleeping less than 6-7 hours per night as well as sleeping more than 8-9 hours per night is associated with heart disease and stroke.
- Irregular or poor-quality sleep, as well as long & short sleep duration, due to things such as shift work or insomnia; are associated with many health consequences including heart disease and stroke.

Dr. Boulos advises some of the following ways to manage sleep apnea:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Avoid sleeping on your back.
- Avoid consumption of alcohol.
- Check with your doctor and pharmacist about the medications you are on.

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- Mandibular advancement device: a mechanism that pushes the lower jaw forward (must be set up by a dentist).
- Continuous positive airway pressure machine (CPAP)- this is the gold standard for moderate to severe sleep apnea.

General sleep and recovery advice for shift workers:

- Minimize insufficient sleep and disruption to the natural sleep-wake cycle.
- If you can, try to give yourself a minimum of 11 hours recovery time between shifts.
- Avoid long weekly working hours (aim for less than 60hrs per week) and work shifts (less than 10hrs per day).
- Prioritize sleep and recovery before, during and after work shifts.
- Maintain a healthy diet, limit night-time eating, stay active, avoid or try to quit smoking, and limit excessive alcohol intake.

Tips to achieving a good night's sleep:

- Aim for approximately 8 hours of sleep every night.
- Keep a regular wake time and bedtime routine, even on weekends.
- A dark, quiet and cool bedroom is recommended.
- Finish eating a couple hours before bedtime.
 - Avoid caffeine within 6 hours of bedtime.
 - Avoid alcohol within 2 hours of bedtime.
- Stop smoking.
- Stay active.
- Avoid sleeping on your back.
- Use your bedroom for sleep only; have your work materials, computers, and TVs in another room.
 - Avoid looking at electronics before bedtime (specifically while in bed).
- Use relaxation techniques before going to sleep (warm shower, massage, etc.).
- If you are unable to sleep within 20 minutes of going to bed, get up and do something boring, then try to go to bed again.
- If you have worries on your mind, write these down so you don't carry these thoughts to bed; keep a notepad near your bed.

Please visit www.heartandstroke.ca for more information about heart conditions, stroke, vascular cognitive impairment and COVID-19.