

SLEEP AND HEALTH

A Good Night's Sleep Isn't Just About Comfort Anymore — It's About Health

By Bruce Goodman

The problem of sleep loss has reached almost epidemic proportions in the United States. Decade by decade, more and more people are reported to be getting six hours or less of sleep per night on average (41 percent of people, based on a 2006 poll by the Better Sleep Council), and that's just not a sufficient amount of sleep for most adults. And according to the National Institutes of Health, 50 to 70 million Americans are affected by some type of sleep problem or disorder, yet many of these problems go undiagnosed or untreated.

What's causing this rise in sleeplessness? Work and technology are two of the biggest culprits as a 24/7 mentality has caused people to work longer hours, while the popularity of devices such as cell phones, PDAs, laptops, and the Internet make workers accessible around the clock. Workers may physically leave the office but don't mentally leave the work, cutting down on time needed to settle in for a good night's rest.

Finding the time to sleep is one challenge; actually falling asleep — or more

importantly, sleeping soundly — is a whole other challenge. The lack of quality sleep can cause profound health problems that reach well beyond the seemingly minor aggravation of feeling a little sleepy during the day. Research has found that prolonged sleep loss can also lead to obesity, depression, hypertension, diabetes, heart attack, stroke, moodiness, and accidents.

Given this, the last thing people want to worry about when their head hits the pillow is the quality of their mattress and how it affects not only their sleep, but their day-to-day well being. This is why SleepLogic, one of the nation's most innovative and respected mattress manufacturers, partnered with the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) back in 2004 as they began the process of creating mattresses that promote healthy sleep.

A four-member ICA committee worked very closely with engineers at SleepLogic during the product development process, and the result was an innovative mattress that supports the spine to keep it in its natural position, which promotes more restorative sleep.

The committee was led by Dr. Don

Hirsh, 2004 ICA Chiropractor of the Year and Chairman of the ICA Committee on Posture and Technique, the Association's key science advisory committee. According to Hirsh, the choice to put the ICA name behind a manufacturer was not one made lightly.

"We were looking for a mattress company that possessed two key attributes: a growth-minded approach to the marketplace and a capacity for creative, innovative thinking. SleepLogic combines those two qualities with the highest level of customer satisfaction and quality control."

SleepLogic's partnership with the ICA is very timely. According to the National Sleep Foundation, the steadily increasing rise in sleep loss is being called an "under-recognized public health problem." A critical claim when considering daytime sleepiness can cause an inability to function properly or concentrate on tasks, resulting in more than 100,000 car crashes per year.

As intended, this partnership has significant value to chiropractors, enabling them to offer a more holistic approach to common health problems often associated with sleep loss and disorders. In fact, according to The Institute of Medicine, sleep loss and disorders are some of the most common, but often overlooked and treatable health problems, yet physicians rarely ask patients questions about the quality of their sleep.

While more training and education is needed to bring health care professionals up-to-speed in recognizing the signs and symptoms of sleep problems, physicians across many different disciplines can be involved in helping diagnose or

treat sleep loss and disorders in their patients.

Chiropractors in particular can help patients take a big step toward getting a better night's rest and improving their overall health by simply evaluating their sleeping habits, and, in many cases, recommending a mattress that provides the proper support and balance that will allow for better posture and a healthier sleep.

This support and balance are offered through two SleepLogic lines, created through the ICA partnership. The ChiroSense™ and LifeScape™ mattresses feature an exclusive multiple-zoned, continuous coil unit and Neural Net® posturization grid in the center third of the bed to provide a uniquely balanced sleep surface with premium support where it's needed most. Both of these mattress lines are available in different coil counts and surface comfort levels such as firm, plush or pillowtop. Certain models offer memory foam, which conforms to the body and relieves pressure points, and an anti-bacterial, anti-microbial fiber feature is an option for allergy sufferers.

Very recently, the ICA announced its endorsement of a brand new line of air mattresses being introduced by SleepLogic. This exciting new air sleep system called Atmospheres™ was designed to provide adjustable, individualized support through its dual-chambered technology. Two people sharing a bed can each customize the level of support they need to get the best sleep possible. Premium mattresses offer state-of-the-art technology with three adjustable zones (head, foot and lum-

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