Treating Sleep Disorders in Children

Karen Payne of Eureka is not a stranger to sleep apnea. She has relatives who have suffered from the sleeping disorder as well as her husband. So she was quick to notice the signs of sleeping problems in two of her children. Fifteen-year-old Bailey and eleven-year-old Elizabeth were having difficulty sleeping.

“They’d get up in the morning and look like they hadn’t slept all night,” says Karen. Elizabeth said she just couldn’t participate in activities at school because she was always so tired. Bailey felt the same way. “I just didn’t have any energy,” he said.

Through sleep studies, they were both diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea. “It’s more than just ‘inconvenient’ to be sleep-deprived,” says Julie Alfaro, Manager of Avera St. Luke’s Sleep Lab, which added pediatric sleep studies to their program about a year ago. “It’s a serious condition that needs to be managed.”

Both Bailey and Elizabeth now use a C-PAP machine at night, which provides a continuous flow of air and prompts the body to kick in and return to breathing whenever the apnea causes the breathing pattern to stop. They can now be more active in school, and Bailey even has enough energy to have a job after school.

“They are so much better now,” says Karen. “I can tell the moment they come down the stairs in the morning. Their eyes are brighter and they are ready to start the day.”

If you’re a parent losing sleep, literally, over a child who isn’t sleeping well, you can rest assured that you’re not the only one. It’s fairly common for children to have problems sleeping. In fact, about 25 percent of children experience a sleep disorder at some point.

A sleep disorder is a disruption in your child’s sleeping pattern that occurs most nights of the week. Though sleep disorders in children are typically temporary and will resolve over time, without proper treatment, sleep disorders can affect your child’s growth, development and overall health.

Sleep problems and a lack of sleep may cause:
- Poor performance in school
- Difficulty concentrating and learning
- Negative social relationships
- Mood and behavior problems
- Symptoms of depression and anxiety

Signs that your child is having sleep problems include:
- Problems falling asleep or problems sleeping through the night
- Difficulty waking up in the morning or feeling tired during the day
- Snoring or breathing pauses during sleep
- Teeth grinding, bedwetting, sleepwalking
- Talking during sleep, nightmares

Some sleep problems can be addressed and your child’s sleep improved by changing routines and habits at home.

The following tips may help your child — and your family — sleep through the night.

- Start a Routine: Establish a regular bedtime routine around the same time every night. Brushing their teeth, washing their face, combing their hair, putting on pajamas and reading a story help signal that it’s almost time for bed.
- Get Rid of Distractions: Leading up to your child’s nightly routine, begin to create a quiet and relaxing space without distractions. Lower the noise level in the house, and turn off the television, video games and music at least one hour before tucking your child in for bed.
- Monitor Caffeine Intake: Caffeine is found in a variety of foods and drinks, including pop, tea, chocolate and some desserts. Avoid giving your child caffeinated food or drinks within six hours of bedtime.

If changing your child’s routines and habits at home doesn’t help to improve their sleep, make an appointment with your pediatrician or call Avera St. Luke’s Sleep Lab at 605-622-5357.
Sometimes drivers don’t realize their skills have deteriorated, and the thought of losing their independence by not being able to drive is something they just don’t want to think about.

Help is available. “Drive Smart,” offered by Avera St. Luke’s Occupational Therapy Department, provides comprehensive driving evaluation and rehabilitation. It is the only program of its type offered in the region.

“The goal is to provide an objective assessment of a person’s ability to drive based on cognitive, visual and physical function,” says Melanie Erickson, a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) at Avera St. Luke’s Hospital. “Then recommendations can be made about the client’s continued driving and methods to help them perform tasks better, and any behind-the-wheel training or assistive technology that’s needed.”

Occupational therapists may recommend adaptive equipment or strategies to improve driving abilities. For example, an individual with a spinal cord injury and lower extremity paralysis can learn to drive using hand controls for acceleration and braking.

“We work with a variety of clients with a large range of deficits or disabilities, clients with diagnoses that could potentially impair function necessary for safe and independent driving,” says Erickson.

If clients aren’t able to drive safely, the therapist will make recommendations to discontinue driving and follow up with mobility counseling.

Drive Smart services include clinical, vehicle, assistive technology and behind-the-wheel assessments, driver education/training and vehicle inspection and fitting. For more information, call 605-622-5708.

Twenty years ago, a group of dedicated obstetrics staff at Avera St. Luke’s Hospital saw a need for better follow-up care for new moms and babies, as hospital discharge within 24 hours of birth was becoming the norm.

With the help of a grant, a free support program began. What started out as a home visit program for mothers and their babies evolved into a centralized clinic located at the BirthPlace. Avera St. Luke’s “Nurturing New Families” program is now celebrating two decades of service!

“Approximately 32 percent of our moms and babies return for a follow-up visit within a week of discharge,” says registered nurse Kim Richter, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant at the BirthPlace. “This is a fragile time for both moms and newborn babies, both physically and emotionally. Most times moms just require reassurance that they are doing fine. When there are challenges, early intervention prevents potential re-admissions, resulting in an extremely cost-effective service.”

In addition to Nurturing New Family visits, 179 moms and babies requested more follow-up visits for breastfeeding challenges last year. “As understanding has increased of breastfeeding’s significant impact on the health of both mother and her child, Avera has made continued lactation support a priority,” Richter says.

This support program has grown tremendously, becoming a vital community service and supporting new families. Having a baby is a life-changing event and requires new skills, new resources and new priorities. With its patient- and family-centered approach, the Nurturing New Families program helps mothers and their babies during those fragile weeks after birth.

For more information on Nurturing New Families or help with breastfeeding challenges, contact Kim Richter at Avera St. Luke’s BirthPlace at 605-622-5749.
A Workout for Your Brain

Reducing the Risks of Dementia

In today’s increasingly health-conscious society, nearly every day we hear about the importance of physical health and keeping our body healthy and fit. We’re reminded of the importance of stretching, for greater flexibility; lifting weights, to gain muscle mass; doing cardio workouts, for a stronger heart; and eating nutritious food, to balance this physical exertion.

The health of our brain, though not always associated with the benefits of physical fitness, cardiovascular activities and diet, is significantly impacted by these habits. Like the other organs of our body, the health of our brain depends on many factors, from lifestyle choices to genetics. Practicing some of the same healthy habits to protect your heart can also help protect your brain.

Especially as we age, these lifestyle habits can help prevent or delay dementia and other related brain and memory loss diseases. Some risk factors of dementia, such as age and genetics, cannot be prevented. Our brain benefits from activities that stretch, strengthen and exercise our thinking and memory. Such mentally stimulating activities can also help reduce the risk of dementia.

Don’t smoke.
Prevent high blood pressure.
Control cholesterol and blood sugar levels.
Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy weight.
Eat a low-fat, heart-healthy diet.
Get enough sleep and manage stress.

Learn something new, such as a foreign language or a musical instrument.
Play games, such as chess, checkers, cards or crossword puzzles.
Read the newspaper, a current events magazine or a good book.
Write letters, short poems or a daily journal.
Vary your habits, attend plays and concerts and visit museums and libraries.
Stay involved socially, join group classes or church and attend community activities.

Dementia is a term used to describe a progressive loss of mental and social skills, which severely interfere with a person’s daily life and his or her ability to perform daily tasks and function independently. The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer’s disease. A stroke can also cause dementia. Along with memory problems, other early symptoms of dementia include:

Feeling confused
Trouble recognizing people and names
Difficulty recalling recent events
Problems planning and carrying out tasks
Struggling to focus and pay attention
Difficulty communicating and finding the right words
Experiencing mood changes

There are some medical conditions that can cause symptoms of dementia, and are treatable and even reversible. For more information about dementia, call Avera St. Luke’s Behavioral Health Services at 605-622-5552.

Asparagus and Mushroom Frittata

Ingredients:
1 tablespoon butter
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
6 eggs
1 tablespoon water
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Recipe Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C).
2. Melt butter in an oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Stir in olive oil and asparagus, and cook until the asparagus is tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the mushrooms, and continue cooking about five minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, water and thyme. Pour into the skillet and reduce heat to low. Cover, and cook five minutes.
4. Transfer the skillet to the preheated oven. Bake 10 to 15 minutes until eggs are no longer runny. Top the mixture with Parmesan cheese and mozzarella cheese. Turn on the broiler and broil until cheeses are melted and lightly browned.

Nutrients Per Serving
Yield: Six servings
Calories: 199
Protein: 11.6G
Carbohydrates: 3.5G
Fat: 16G
Fiber: 1.2G
Sodium: 183MG
Cholesterol: 225MG

Source: allrecipes.com
Do you believe in magic?
Kevin and Cindy Spencer believe in it so much that they’ve taken their skills as illusionists beyond the level of performance. Since 1984, they’ve been spreading the word about using magic tricks as a healing tool.

The nationally honored duo will provide community outreach in Aberdeen for two days before their Theater of Illusion public performance on April 10. Kevin will spend one day with Avera St. Luke’s therapists and working with patients, using his “Healing of Magic,” a carefully designed, systematic approach to the therapeutic use of simple magic tricks in rehabilitation.

Kevin Spencer is widely considered a leading authority on the therapeutic use of magic in education. He’ll spend one day with students in Aberdeen schools, working with special needs students and conducting a workshop for teachers. “Hocus Focus” utilizes the art of magic for empowering student growth and development.

For the Spencers, magic is truly more than an illusion. It’s a way to make a difference in the lives of their audience and those with whom they work in hospitals and rehabilitation centers around the world. Through their unique approach, new treatments are being explored that effectively improve everyday skills of people who have experienced strokes or accidents, have spinal cord or head injuries, learning or developmental disabilities, plus many other diagnoses.

The Spencers’ residency is sponsored by Avera St. Luke’s Hospital and the Aberdeen Area Arts Council, with support from the Arts Midwest Touring Fund, National Endowment for the Arts and South Dakota Arts Council.