

# Is your teen getting enough sleep?

With school starting up again in Kansas, the lazy days of summer for children and adolescents are coming to an abrupt end.

For teenagers who have gotten used to sleeping late during the summer months, the early start times at many high schools are bound to cause a few rude awakenings. In recent years, more schools than ever have begun requiring their bleary-eyed students to arise before dawn to make it to classes that start at 7 a.m., or even earlier.

Without the help of caring adults, these young people will limp through their school days in a chronic state of sleep deprivation.

Sleep loss is becoming a serious concern for teachers, parents and health professionals who care about the well-being of young people. Recently the American Medical Association House of Delegates voted to identify insufficient sleep and daytime sleepiness among adolescents as a critical public health problem needing more attention.

Evidence is growing that sleep-deprived teenagers suffer from an array of problems related to attention, memory and control of inappropriate behavior. As a group, drowsy teens are more likely to underperform in school, to drive recklessly on the street, and to miss getting the exercise they need to avoid obesity and other health problems.

Compelling research now shows that most adolescents need about nine or even ten hours of restful sleep every night to function at their best. But surveys tell us that only 15 percent of teens get even eight and one-half hours of shuteye on school nights, and that many are getting by with barely six hours of sleep, or even less.

What this means is that most teenagers today, kids whose lives are filled with homework, sports, after-school activities and part-



**Jason Eberhart-Phillips**

• Kansas Health Officer

time jobs, are falling well short of the sleep their bodies require for good health and full enjoyment of life. Some kids get so little sleep they might best be described as walking zombies.

One seemingly simple solution is to get teens into bed at an earlier hour. After all, wise people like Ben Franklin have told us for years that good things will happen to those who make a habit of being "early to bed and early to rise."

What Franklin didn't know was that normal adolescents undergo a physiological change around the time of puberty, a change that sleep experts call the "sleep-wake phase delay." During the teenage years, humans naturally begin to feel more awake in the evening than they did as children.

This means that throughout the world teens will unavoidably shift their bedtimes by at least two hours into the night, and arise later the next morning — unless early school bells say otherwise. For American teens today, this biologically determined sleep cycle puts them directly in conflict with school start times, with hours of precious sleep lost as a result.

What can parents and other concerned adults do about the problem of teenage sleep deprivation?

First, we can lend our support to later school start times by raising the issue with school administrators and local school boards.

In schools around the country where later start times have been implemented, adolescents have shown improved motivation, better class attendance, heightened academic performance, fewer incidents of misbehavior and greater overall alertness.

With all that we know now about the importance of teens getting enough sleep, it may be time for Kansas educators to consider seriously the benefits of an 8:30 a.m. start time in high schools around the state.

On the home front, parents can help their teens get better sleep by assuring that their bedrooms are quiet havens for real rest, with all electronic devices turned off at night.

They can also help their teens avoid caffeine late in the day, ensure that they get adequate physical activity during the day to improve nighttime sleepiness, and see that they take 30 minutes or more before bed to wind down by reading something light, listening to music, or taking a bath or shower.

Finally, parents can help set a consistent bedtime and wake-up schedule for their teens, even on weekends. Routine sleep times will get a teen's body into sync with its natural sleep pattern, making it easier to doze off at bedtime and be more alert during the day.

We live in a culture that undervalues sleep and its restorative powers for body and mind. Sadly, our teenagers may be paying the price for that, unless we act to make getting a good night's sleep a higher priority.

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## On the Beat

### THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF Sunday

7:39 a.m. — Subject with a blown tire at Joker's.  
8:32 a.m. — Disabled vehicle in the Breton rest area. Everything okay, vehicle overheating.  
9:28 a.m. — Sheridan County Sheriff's Office advised of vehicle all over the road westbound on U.S. 24 from mile 70. Unable to locate.  
10 a.m. — Vehicle went off I-70 through median around exit 70. 24/7 towed; not an accident.

10:50 a.m. — Arrest warrants out of Sherman County and Decatur County served on Jerri L. Brown.

12:43 p.m. — Rawlins County Sheriff's Office requested assistance on a chase and rolling domestic case. Disregarded at 12:52.

1:31 p.m. — Transported prisoner to the Fuel Depot for Sherman County Sheriff's Office.

6:16 p.m. — Semi with flashers on shoulder of I-70 eastbound at mile 41.

## Yard sale turns up bike with a celebrity history

By Jeffrey McMurray  
Associated Press Writer

LEXINGTON, Ky. (AP) — The bicycle had two flat tires, but Greg Estes figured the \$5 asking price still made it a great bargain at a yard sale. Little did he know just how great.

Estes checked out the bike's origin after buying it in Owenton this month. He was shocked to learn it may be worth as much as \$8,000. It had been custom built for cycling star Floyd Landis, who used it in the 2007 Leadville 100, a mountain bike race in Colorado.

Landis crashed but finished second in that race, which was shortly after his victory in the 2006 Tour de France, a win since vacated due to doping charges.

"It's a Cadillac of bicycles, that's for sure," said Estes, 38, of Owenton. "It's just unreal how good it rides."

A sticker on the bike told him it was custom built by Cyco-Path Bicycles out of Temecula, Calif., near San Diego. Store manager Loren Foley said he was stunned when Estes started describing the parts, knowing the company had made only one such model, and they remembered it well considering Landis' celebrity at the time.

Foley dug up photographs of the Colorado race to be sure and recognized Landis' crashed bicycle as identical to the model Estes was describing.

"It's even got the same under-seat gear bag, the same tires," Foley said. "It's definitely the same bike."

As for value, Foley said Estes could expect to collect \$5,500 to \$6,000 for it on the open market — maybe quite a bit more if he

gets actual value or a premium because it once belonged to a celebrity.

For fun, Estes put the bike in his own yard sale, replacing the \$5 price tag with a \$6,000 one. He got no takers, but a lot of perplexed looks.

He says he planned to resell it ever since he bought it, and certainly does now.

"I was planning on making a couple hundred dollars off it," Estes said. "Never dreamed it would come out to be an \$8,000 bicycle. Kind of just blows your mind, something like that."

Estes says he understands how the bike got discounted. Besides flat tires, it had pedals that the yard sale owner thought were broken but actually are the smaller, clip-in pedals used by serious riders.

The bigger mystery, however, is how it got to the yard sale at all. The seller told Estes her family found it on the side of an Interstate highway in Kentucky.

Landis did not immediately respond to an e-mail from the Associated Press seeking comment. He recently returned to the spotlight when he sent e-mails to cycling officials that accused ex-teammate Lance Armstrong, along with his longtime doctor and trainer, and numerous other U.S. cyclists, of running an organized doping program earlier this decade. Armstrong has denied the allegations.

Estes says he offered the previous yard sale owner part of the profits if he resells, but her response was finders, keepers.

"If someone lost it or had it stolen and wants it back, they can have it back, but it's going to take some serious documentation," Estes said.

## Activities need to be chosen carefully by parents

Back-to-school days can be hectic, but a lot like shopping in a candy store with money in your pocket. It's tempting to choose one of everything, but doing so probably isn't in anyone's best interest.

School enrollment offers opportunities to choose a variety of activities, yet peer pressure, the desire to provide a child options his or her parents didn't have, or activities to give a child a competitive edge, may or may not be in the best interest of the child or the family, said Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Kansas State University Research and Extension family systems specialist.

A new school year will bring its share of adjustments. And, while education is a priority, most parents may already be juggling jobs

and one or more school schedules, she said.

"The family also must be a priority," said Olsen, who explained that families who try to balance work, school and community are likely to fare the best.

"Look at the big picture before making any additional commitments," said Olsen, who advised parents to sit down with their children and weigh the advantages and disadvantages activities will provide.

Olsen suggested the following considerations:

- What is a child's age?
- Does he or she seem to be able to handle expectations in the classroom?
- What are his or her interests in and out of class?
- What benefits will an activity

provide?

- What are the requirements for participating? When and where does it meet?

- Is transportation available?
- What is the cost to participate? Does that include extras?

- Why does the child want to participate?

- Is this a short- or long-term commitment?

- And, if a child could choose only one activity, which would it be?

It's helpful if both parents are on the same page in asking a child to consider negatives and positives to help whittle down the list of choices, Olsen said.

The size of the family and the ages of children will be factors in choosing, she said.

And pushing a child to over-ex-

tend him or herself may not leave time for the child to learn and grow in any area, she said.

Youth development activities should allow time for youth to develop, said Olsen, who reminded parents to also "be intentional" in scheduling time for family.

"It's important for everyone to relax and have downtime," Olsen said.

"Children need to see their parents and family together as a unit. Doing so strengthens the family and each of its members," the family systems specialist said.

Information on managing family relationships successfully is available at county and district K-State Research and Extension offices and online at [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu).

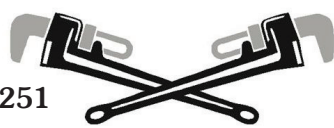
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