Can losing sleep cause you to gain weight?

Survey: Americans Baffled by Sugary Beverages
Milk, fruit juice, diet soda—do you know which drinks conceal hidden sugars? A new survey suggests many consumers don’t. And since almost 36 percent of added sugars in the American diet come from beverages, this mix-up could place your waistline—and your health—at risk.

Humor May Help Healing
Had a good belly laugh lately? Some researchers think humor may keep you from getting sick or even speed the healing process.

Learn the Warning Signs of Problem Drinking
About 15% of Americans are problem drinkers. How can you tell if someone has a problem with alcohol? Read on to learn more.

Volunteering Can Help Older Adults Live Longer
People volunteer their time in a multitude of ways. They may donate their time to other adults, children or babies, through a variety of volunteer activities. The time they give certainly helps others. But it might also improve the volunteers' quality of life—and even affect their health.

Losing Sleep Linked to Gaining Weight
Sleep is important for more than just your happiness and productivity. New research shows that if you don’t get enough shut-eye, your risk for obesity goes up. Here’s what your sleep habits today might say about your waistline tomorrow—and what you can do.

How Much Do You Know About Children’s Sports Safety?
Each year, about 38 million children and teens take to the field, track, court, or mat. A new national survey finds major misconceptions among parents and even coaches that may add to the kids’ risk for injury. Learn what you can do to keep kids healthy and active.
Loma Linda University Health Events
Join LLUH at Our Upcoming Community Events

Children’s Day
Wednesday, May 7
8:30 AM - 2:00 PM
FREE!

Come learn about the hospital in a fun way!
Features:
- Doll and Stuffed Animal Clinic
- (for check-ups and immunizations)
- Dr. Hayes’ Venomous Animal Education Program
- Pretend Finger Casts
- Safety and Fire Prevention
- Jamba Juice

Children’s Day is located on the North Lawn on University Avenue between Anderson Street and Campus Street at Loma Linda University Medical Center.

1-800-825-KIDS

Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital

Last reviewed: April 2014

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Survey: Americans Baffled by Sugary Beverages

The latest government guidelines advise replacing sugar-sweetened drinks with water. These beverages, which include soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks, contribute between 300 and 500 extra calories to Americans’ diets each day.

While milk and 100-percent fruit juice also contain sugars—these sugars occur naturally. This makes them a good option, and they can play a role in a healthy diet.

In an online survey of more than 3,300 adults, 96 percent correctly identified regular soda as sugary. However, participants also held a number of false beliefs:

- About 26 percent incorrectly said diet soft drinks contain added sugar.
- Only 58 percent knew that sports drinks have added sugar.
- As many as 13 percent wrongly think sugar is added to 100-percent fruit juices, and 40 percent identified these drinks as “sugary.”

Results were published in the journal *Nutrition Research*.

Being Aware Leads to Healthier Behaviors

The good news: awareness pays off. Close to 40 percent of those surveyed said they were concerned about sugar in beverages. These people sipped fewer sodas, fruit juice blends, and other drinks with added sugar. They swigged more water or other unsweetened beverages instead.

Decode Labels to Find Hidden Sugars

Spotting hidden sugars can take some work. Both natural and added sugars appear as part of the “sugar” total on the Nutrition Facts panel.

To spot added sugars, scour the ingredients list. Look for words that end in “ose,” along with molasses, cane sugar, corn sweetener, raw sugar, syrup, honey, or fruit juice concentrates. The higher these words are on the list, the more sugary the beverage.

Learn more about why water is the best alternative to sugary beverages. Your body needs it!

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Humor May Help Healing

One way humor may aid healing is by stimulating the release of endorphins, the body’s soothing chemicals. Both smiling and laughter increase endorphins.

In fact, the endorphins triggered by humor may help a person cope with pain. The volunteers in one study kept their hands submerged in cold water longer than those in the other group of volunteers while they watched a humorous film. The other participants, who watched a documentary film or did not view any film, could not tolerate the pain as well.

Laughter also may relieve allergic conditions. In a small study, people with atopic dermatitis, an allergic skin disorder, viewed the classic comedy “Modern Times.” After watching this funny movie, patients showed significantly smaller allergic skin reactions to dust mites and other allergens than they did after viewing a weather video.

Laugh Away Your Stress

Other research has found that humor helps people cope with stressful environments.

Laughter:

- reduces stress hormones
- improves blood flow
- may even lower blood pressure.

Add Some Humor to Your Life

Here are a few ways to give yourself some healthy laughs:

- Fit some fun into your workouts. Swing on a swing, climb a jungle gym, or dance to silly music.
- Take every chance you get to play with children or animals.
- Learn to laugh at yourself.
- Read the comics in the newspaper or watch funny videos.
- Keep toys, a bottle of bubbles, or soundmakers around for amusement.

Last reviewed: April 2014
Learn the Warning Signs of Problem Drinking

Here are the answers to some common questions about alcohol:

**Q. What makes someone an alcoholic?**
A. An alcoholic has an uncontrollable need for alcohol. This craving can feel as strong as the need for water or food.

Alcoholism is now viewed as a disease with the following symptoms:

- A strong craving to drink.
- Not being able to stop drinking after a person has started.
- Nausea and other withdrawal symptoms when a person stops drinking after a period of heavy abuse.
- The need for more and more alcohol in order to get high.

**Q. What about people who seem to have a problem with alcohol but don’t “need” to drink?**
A. Problem drinkers are different from alcoholics in that they do not have a strong craving for alcohol or any of the other symptoms listed above.

However, problem drinkers face many of the same alcohol-related risks as alcoholics do. These problems include drunk driving, relationship troubles, and liver disease.

A person may have a drinking problem if she has experienced any of the following situations in the last year:

- Not being able to meet responsibilities at work or elsewhere because of drinking
- Drinking when driving or in other dangerous situations
- Getting arrested for alcohol-related problems
- Continuing to drink despite relationship problems caused by alcohol intake

There’s also one more difference between problem drinkers and alcoholics: If problem drinkers truly want to address their problem, they can often cut back to healthy levels or stop drinking on their own. However, alcoholics can rarely stop without help.

**Q. Is alcoholism inherited or caused by one’s environment?**
A. Alcoholism does run in families. But that doesn't mean that the child of an alcoholic will necessarily become an alcoholic. Environmental factors also come into play, such as low self-esteem and the influence of friends.

**Q. How is alcoholism treated?**
A. Experts are learning more and more about how to successfully treat alcoholism. A doctor or staff at an alcohol treatment program can work with a patient to determine the best treatment
approaches. These may include the following:

- Counseling aimed at helping alcoholics learn how to resist the urge to drink.
- Drug therapy that helps relieve withdrawal, cravings, and other physical symptoms of alcoholism.
- Participation in peer-support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, which provide ongoing help.

If you or someone you know are experiencing issues with alcoholism, please call the Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center for more information or schedule a free assessment. We offer both inpatient and outpatient programs. lubmc.org | 909-558-9275

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Volunteering Can Help Older Adults Live Longer

People volunteer their time in a multitude of ways. They may donate their time to other adults, children or babies, through a variety of volunteer activities.

The time they give certainly helps others. But it might also improve the volunteers’ quality of life—and even affect their health.

Volunteering May Extend Your Life

Experts say that volunteering is good for people of all ages, though most research has focused on older adults.

Benefits include higher self-esteem and a greater sense of well-being.

Volunteering may boost physical health, too. Studies have found that older adults who volunteer have lower death rates than those who don’t.

Several factors may explain these findings. For example, experts say that having meaningful relationships, being productive and keeping active are all vital to healthy aging. Volunteering makes these possible.

Lend a Helping Hand

Do you love children? Are you a tax wizard? Is music your passion? Whatever your skills, chances are, there’s an organization that can put them to good use. Opportunities range from regular commitments to only occasional help. Be sure to choose something that interests you. And remember: You may get as much out of volunteering as do the people you help.

Loma Linda University Health offers a wide array of volunteer opportunities. Visit our website to learn how you can use your talents and abilities to help the community!

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Losing Sleep Linked to Gaining Weight

To keep off the pounds, get some shut-eye: Short sleep is linked to weight gain, according to a new study.

The study involved more than 80,000 healthy Americans older than age 50. Researchers tracked the subjects' sleep habits and weight for an average of more than seven years.

The results: People who slept less than five hours per night were 40 percent more likely to become obese than people who slept seven to eight hours. The study was published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Sleep Slows Weight Gain

The average American gains nearly one pound per year. But the less you sleep each night, the more weight you’re likely to put on, the study found. People who logged less than five hours of shut-eye each night gained an average of one to one and a half pounds more than those who slept seven to eight hours.

Lack of sleep may alter hormones that regulate appetite, the researchers say. As a result, you might eat more calories. Feeling tired might also make you less likely to exercise. Eating more calories than you burn makes you gain weight.

What Your Sleep Says About Your Health

Too little sleep is linked to health problems including diabetes, depression and cancer. Most adults need seven to eight hours of sleep. But everyone is different. You may need more or less.

If you suspect that you aren’t getting enough sleep, tell your doctor. Your doctor may suggest new habits or medication.

Visit our health library for tips on getting better sleep.

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How Much Do You Know About Children’s Sports Safety?

Young athletes look to adults for help preventing injuries. In fact, about a third of children said good players shouldn’t stop when they’re hurt unless a coach or parent tells them to, according to a survey from the nonprofit organization Safe Kids Worldwide.

But other survey results suggest adults often don’t know all the facts about injury prevention, which could lead to trouble for kids. For instance:

- Nine in 10 parents underestimate the amount of time children should take off any given sport per year. Children should take a two-month break from a specific sport each year to prevent overuse injuries, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Half of coaches wrongly think minor head injuries can’t cause serious brain damage.
- Nearly seven in 10 parents allow their kids to play on more than one team at the same time. The National Athletic Trainers’ Association advises against this if practices and games occur on more than five days per week.

Parents Have a Job to Do

Nine of 10 parents trust coaches to keep young athletes safe. Yet only two in five parents know how much injury prevention training coaches have received.

Coaches, meanwhile, are stretched too thin. Nearly half say other responsibilities prevent them from focusing on safety. And although four in five believe it’s important to be educated on sports injury prevention, only half describe themselves as well-trained.

Smart Steps Keep Young Athletes Safe

Nine of 10 coaches knew one important fact: About half of youth sports injuries are preventable. Parents can help by:

- Knowing the safety basics for their child’s sports
- Watching for the warning signs of concussion. These include dizziness, vomiting, head pressure, and fatigue.
- Asking coaches about their training and emergency action plans

Download safety guides on Sports Safety and many other topics from Safe Kids World Wide.
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