

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## FITNESS HOMEWORK: Consequences of Poor Sleep

Data on children, teens and adults confirm that sleep loss and sleep difficulties can have serious detrimental effects. Research specifically on adolescents and young adults is relatively new and limited, but scientists believe that many effects demonstrated in studies and clinical observations of adults are similar in adolescents. Sleep researchers, therefore, believe that insufficient sleep in teens and young adults is linked to:

- **Increased risk of unintentional injuries and death.** As noted, drowsiness or fatigue has been identified as a principle cause in at least 100,000 traffic crashes each year. In addition, about 1 million, or one-sixth, of traffic crashes in the United States are believed to be attributable to lapses in the driver's attention; sleep loss and fatigue significantly increase the chances of such lapses occurring. A North Carolina state study found that drivers age 25 or younger cause more than one-half (55 percent) of fall asleep crashes. The same symptoms of sleepiness that contribute to traffic crashes can also play a role in non-traffic injuries, such as those associated with handling hazardous equipment in the workplace or in the home. Furthermore, adolescents who have not received sufficient sleep and who consume even small amounts of alcohol are at greater risk of injury than those who are not lacking sleep because sleep loss has been shown to heighten the effects of alcohol. (Roehrs et al., 1994)
- **Low grades and poor school performance.** High school students who describe themselves as having academic problems and who are earning C's or below in school report getting less sleep, having later bedtimes and having more irregular sleep schedules than students reporting higher grades. (Note: A causal relationship has not yet been established.) (Wolfson and Carskadon, 1998)
- **Negative moods** (e.g., anger, sadness and fear), difficulty controlling emotions and behavior problems. In one study, female high school students who went to sleep on the weekend two or more hours later than their typical weeknight bedtime reported feeling more depressed than those who did not stay up late on the weekends. (Wolfson and Carskadon, 1998) Studies also suggest that sleep loss may be associated with a decreased ability to control, inhibit or change emotional responses. (Dahl, 1999) Some signs of sleepiness, such as inability to stay focused on a task, impulsivity, difficulty "sitting still," and problems completing tasks, resemble behaviors common also in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Dahl, 1999). In addition, a 1995 study of students in transition from junior high to senior high school found that conduct/aggressive behaviors were highly associated with shorter sleep times and later sleep start time. (Wolfson et al., 1995)
- **Increased likelihood of stimulant use** (including caffeine and nicotine), alcohol and similar substances. (Carskadon, 1990) Teens who are heavily involved in school and community activities, their jobs and other responsibilities appear to be at greater risk for the above effects of sleepiness than those who are less involved in activities and who either do not hold jobs or who work fewer hours. (Carskadon, 1990)

Teens who are heavily involved in school and community activities, their jobs and other responsibilities appear to be at greater risk for the above effects of sleepiness than those who are less involved in activities and who either do not hold jobs or who work fewer hours. (Carskadon, 1990)

**Assignment – Physical – 30 min. Workout of your choice.** Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature (Required):** \_\_\_\_\_ **I participated with my child: Yes** \_\_\_\_\_ **(.5 extra credit) No** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer in complete sentences with well developed answers.

1. What is the main idea of the article? Support with details.
2. How would you change your sleeping habits after reading this article?
3. Do you feel that this is important for middle schools students why or why not?