

A LOT GOES INTO YOUR SLEEP

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR A MORE RESTFUL NIGHT, WRITES DR. NADIA ALAM



DR. NADIA ALAM
Column

Many of my patients are reporting that they have trouble sleeping at night.

They know because they wake up tired. They struggle to concentrate and may even fall asleep during the day while driving or watching TV.

Humans spend a third of their lives sleeping. And while most people sleep an average of seven to eight hours a night, there is no right number to strive for. The need for sleep varies with a person's age.

It's also important to understand that waking up refreshed depends on many factors, not just sleep. Diet, exercise and stress management matter. Mental and physical health matter. Workload and burnout matter.

For those who want to improve their sleep habits, here are five tips to get you started:

1. Check your sleep environment: Your mattress and pillow should support your back and neck. The

room should be dark and quiet. The temperature should be cool.

2. Avoid screens for at least 30 minutes before bedtime: Going to bed with your phone affects sleep architecture by interfering with your body's natural production of melatonin, a sleep hormone. Blue light from screens can also damage your retina and worsen your vision.

3. Do activities that are conducive to winding down your brain and body: Take a 30-minute stroll in the evening. Read a book. Play a board game. Do some colouring.

4. Meditate: Mindfulness meditation is learning how to be fully present in the moment and be aware of your thoughts and feelings without distraction or judgment. It reduces anxiety and can help with sleep, stress and chronic pain.

5. Review your medications with your family doctor: Some can cause sleep disturbances. Some can be overly sedating. Using medications to fall asleep is not the answer; sleep aids make insomnia worse and can also increase the risk of car accidents, falls, hip fractures and so on.

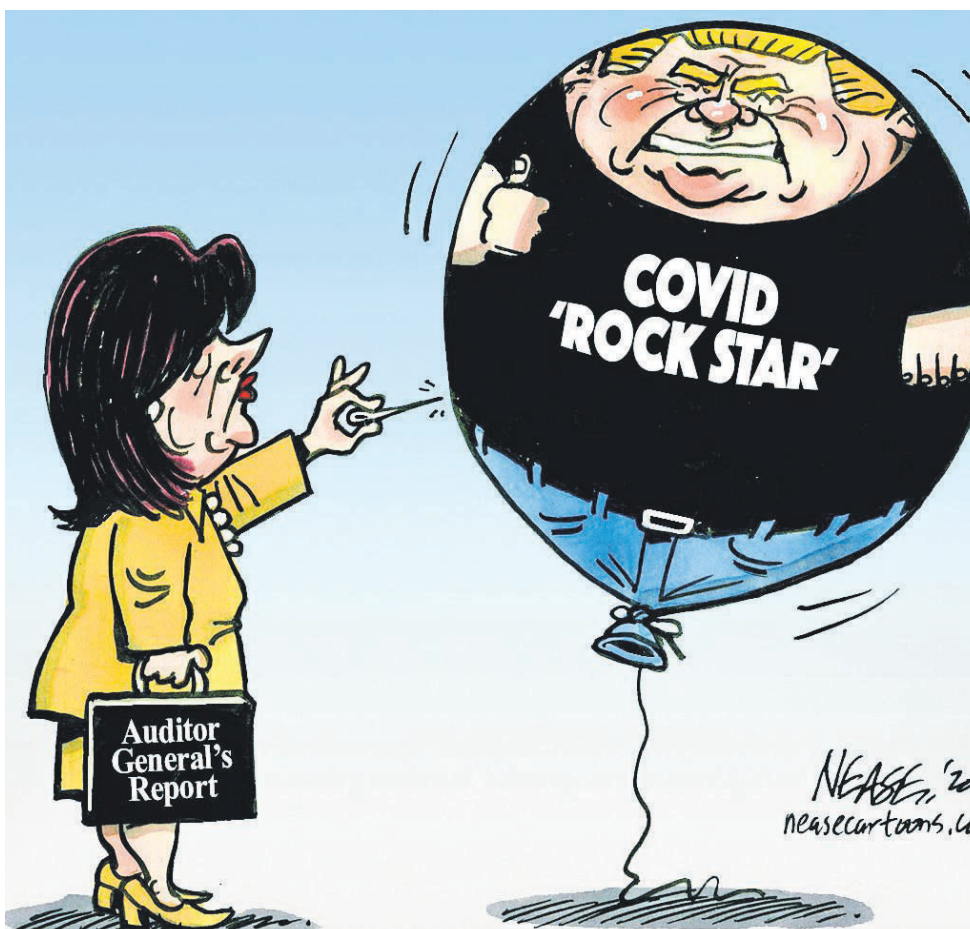
There's more that you can do. Talk to your family doctor about getting a good night's rest.

Dr. Nadia Alam is a Halton physician and past president of the Ontario Medical Association. Her columns also appear on www.drnadialam.com. She can be reached through her website.

MORE ONLINE

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SHOP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

ONLINE AND DELIVERY SERVICES OFFERED BY MANY BUSINESSES, WRITES GARY CARR



GARY CARR
Column

This year has been difficult for many small businesses. As we approach the busiest shopping time of the year, I want to remind residents to safely support Halton's local businesses.

Many of our local retailers and shops have been adapting to the pandemic by offering convenient online, delivery and curbside

pickup options to ensure customers can stay safe while getting the products and services they need.

I strongly encourage everyone to support Halton's business community.

SHOP ONLINE AND STAY SAFE

Whether you are looking for the perfect gift, want to order takeout or simply need to order groceries, there are many ways you can support Halton businesses:

- Purchase items online from local businesses: Many small businesses offer online and in-store options. Visit the websites of local shops or retailers to place an order.

- Order takeout, curbside pickup or delivery from local restaurants and businesses: Whether you are ordering a meal, supplies for your home, gifts for the holidays or weekly groceries, call ahead or or-

der online and arrange for curbside pickup or contactless delivery.

If you need to shop in person for any essential goods and services, remember to stay safe by maintaining a two-metre distance from others and wearing a face covering or non-medical mask.

Halton businesses have also implemented many guidelines to help keep shoppers and staff safe during the pandemic — please remember to follow them.

Shopping online and shopping local help to keep everyone safe while supporting our business community.

Together, we can help keep Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Gary Carr is regional chair of Halton Region. He can be reached at gary.carr@halton.ca.

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