

The Pandemic of Bad Sleep & A New Way To Combat A Leading Cause of It

By Nadja Atwal

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First the Covid-19 pandemic, then inflation and now headlines about a looming recession. Add deadline pressure plus cutting costs and no one is surprised anymore that busy professionals and especially business leaders are increasing facing sleepless nights.

It's a sad fact: more and more people see a decrease in their quality of sleep as stress and anxiety are skyrocketing. In milder to moderate cases we can help ourselves with some habit changes according to sleep experts.

"This includes not drinking coffee, even decaf, in the afternoon or evening,...., opting for soft blue nightlight instead of heading for the big switch at 2 am.

Also important is to establish a routine of winding down 20 minutes before bedtime without phone or TV. " recommends Dr. Adam Zuber, Harvard trained neurologist and sleep specialist who sees new sleep-deprived patients flocking to his practice in California. And just when we thought that one or two classes of red wine would be the solution, we learn that yes, it makes us sleepy but it does not make us stay asleep – in fact it further compromises our sleep quality. So there goes alcohol as a quick fix.

But Zuber also points out the misconception about how much sleep we actually need :

"People need around six hours of sleep, as adults, to feel well-rested, however the reality is people will force themselves to sleep longer, but after the six hours of rest, they wake up and cannot go back to sleep. Sleep consolidation, a term that means organizing ones sleep to an optimal level, is an accepted measure to treat insomnia and restless sleep.

Sleep consolidation is not a term commonly known or heard of by most non sleep specialists. As sleep specialists we recommend limiting the total time in bed to six hours. Meaning if one's natural wakeup time is 6 AM, then one should go to bed at 12 midnight. This pattern of sleep helps a person fall asleep easily and treat insomnia.

Sleep consolidation also increases sleep. Non Rem sleep is the critical part of a human's sleep cycle. About 80% of the sleep cycle is Non Rem sleep, it is the period when short term memory is converted to long term memory. That is why people who have insomnia, sleep apnea and restless sleep, have poor memory and complain of not remembering things readily, this can also lead to having difficulty with job performance and productivity."



Now a growing concern are those sleep interfering factors we can not change by ourselves. In that category falls the rising mass problem of teeth grinding – which has turned into an outright epidemic itself .

"We have seen a new, alarming increase in Bruxism – and the severe consequences it can entail", says top Oral & Maxillofacial & Surgeon Dr. Mark Stein, whose sophisticated and tranquil practice on the Fifth Avenue in New York right at Central Park has become a magnet to concerned professionals from all over the world.

Bruxism – also known as teeth grinding – happens to millions of us at night while we are sleeping. Unaware of anything while we are doing it, we are clenching and pushing our lower jaw against the upper teeth. The evidence of such actions is usually displayed the next day . People don't feel properly rested or worse, experience headaches and some even mild to strong feel jaw pain.

And stress often is the key factor. Hence so many busy professionals suffering and it only got dramatically worse since 2020. But how to stop that nightly teeth grinding? Often dentists would recommend night guards, but wearing one can be very uncomfortable and so many only to happily choose to forget putting theirs in before switching off the light.

A new solution needed to be found.

Of all things, Botox has evolved as a great option – as long as administered by very skillful hands. The muscle that is in charge of chewing and grinding is basically being artificially relaxed. “It is very important to get the exact amount and location right, of course, so the muscle is still fully functional and the only thing you won’t do anymore is break your teeth”, Stein points out.

Hence new patients are coming from across the country and even travel internationally to get freed from unwanted nightly jaw-activity to enhance their sleep quality.

What concerns Stein is the rise of clientele where teeth grinding has reached a whole other level and would not stop at headaches or jaw pain.

“People would grind their teeth to the point where they not only change the shape of their teeth, but actually break them. And we are sadly seeing a lot more of that – down to broken back teeth.”



The only solution then: dental implants. And since the need for it has been skyrocketing over the recent years, significant changes with regards to the procedure have emerged which result in implants now being something way more mainstream unlike years ago when people feared it like a triple root canal. Today implants are placed using state of the art, computer guided surgery to achieve the most precise, safe, comfortable procedure and outcome.

Stein nods: “Dental implants have become the main, and in most cases, the most optimal way to permanently replace missing teeth and with an esthetic and absolutely natural outcome.”

Bottom line: There is a lot we can do to improve our quality of sleep. When it comes to teeth grinding, it is comforting to know that these days some creative specialists have found new ways for us to no longer let our dental concerns keep us up at night.

Sweet dreams.