

THE RISE

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

- Don't use smartphones, tablets or other electronic devices in bed.
- Don't read or reply to emails — especially work emails — right before bedtime.
- Don't watch television in bed.
- Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time.
- Avoid naps.
- Make sure your bedroom has a comfortable temperature.
- Exercise promotes continuous sleep, but avoid rigorous exercise before bedtime.
- Avoid cigarettes and alcohol before bed. They can cause fragmented sleep.
- Get out of bed if you cannot fall asleep after 20 minutes, move to another room to read, stretch or perform another calming activity and return to bed after you are more relaxed.
- Use mindfulness meditation techniques in bed, such as progressive muscle relaxation. Free guided meditations are online. Use audio-only files to prevent light from a screen.
- To help adjust to Sunday's time change, go to bed at your regular bedtime Sunday night.
- If you have serious sleep issues, consult a physician.

Sources: USC Professor Jennifer Ailshire, USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice, American Sleep Association

School of Medicine, said both studies have limitations because they rely on self-reporting.

"People are not good judges of when they are sleeping," said Hale, founding editor-in-chief of the Sleep Health Journal.

The time-use survey is especially prone to overestimating sleep time because some actions deemed "sleep" — such as "falling asleep" and "waking up" — may not involve actual sleep, she said. Some respondents may count winding-down bedtime activity — such as chatting with a spouse while in bed — as sleep.

Hale said research involving movement-detecting devices worn on the wrist can provide more reliable approximations of sleep time. Between 2014 and 2016, Hale and researchers from three other universities measured the sleep of more than 800 teenagers using the devices and have applied for funding to measure the same people again, to determine whether sleep duration increased, decreased or was stable as they enter young adulthood. It may be the first national longitudinal study of sleep using the devices, she said.

Sheehan said racial disparities in short sleep could widen

the existing disparities in the overall healthiness of whites, African-Americans and Latinos.

Studies show that insufficient sleep can lead to an array of health problems, including hypertension, obesity and diabetes, said Dr. Harly Greenberg, medical director of the Northwell Health Sleep Disorders Center at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset.

"You need to rev up your alerting systems, your arousal systems, to compensate and maintain wakefulness in the face of insufficient sleep time," he said.

That can raise the heart rate, increase blood pressure and constrict blood vessels, he said.

Lack of sleep also appears to affect mechanisms in the brain that regulate appetite, leading to a greater craving for high-calorie foods, including sweets, Greenberg said. That can lead to weight gain.

In addition, sleep deprivation makes tissues in the body more resistant to the effect the hormone insulin has in facilitating the transfer of glucose from the bloodstream to tissues — leading to higher levels of glucose in the blood, he said. That may increase the risk of diabetes.

Fire officials discuss volunteering's challenges

BY CRAIG SCHNEIDER
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The challenges of running a volunteer fire department — the budget constraints, cancer risks and difficulty recruiting young people — highlighted a meeting of fire officials Saturday in Albertson.

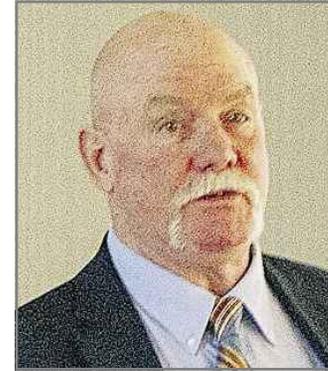
State fire officials emphasized the problems of keeping up with the changing landscape of volunteer firefighting, as they briefed about 75 local first responders on state legislative priorities.

Steven Klein, president of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York, noted that emergency medical service work constitutes the majority of calls answered by volunteer fire departments on Long Island.

But these departments are prevented by law from recovering the expenses of EMS service by billing people's insurance companies or government insurance provided, such as Medicare or Medicaid, he said. The costs are borne by taxpayers and donations, he said.

The fire association is asking the State Legislature to allow volunteer departments, which are spread across Long Island, to bill for these services. Klein noted that commercial ambulance services and standalone volunteer ambulance corps are permitted to bill for such services.

Klein noted that many volunteer departments are suffering budget constraints, and



Thomas McDonough

that their lifesaving abilities could be compromised without this law.

"They cannot function in the future without this bill," said Assemb. Michael LiPetri (R-South Farmingdale), one of a handful of legislators attending the meeting hosted by the Albertson Fire Department. "Our EMS crews are doing the same job as those who can bill. We should be getting that money recovered and we're not."

Opponents of the bill, which has languished for years in the legislature, say it could prompt insurance companies to raise premiums or increase the burden on taxpayer-funded Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Thomas McDonough, vice chairman of the group's legislative committee, talked about the increasing cancer risks that come with firefighting. He said the association supports legislation to prohibit the sale of upholstered furniture containing certain flame-

retardant chemicals, which he said release cancer-causing agents when they burn.

"This stuff is killing us, and it is killing the people who are trapped in these [burning] homes," McDonough said.

In addition, he said, the group supports expanding the types of cancers covered under insurance for firefighters, such as thyroid and testicular cancer.

"I had thyroid cancer," said McDonough, a former chief of the Port Washington Fire Department. "I'm a thyroid cancer survivor. It's not covered."

State Sen. John Brooks (D-Seaford) said firefighters are facing a growing number of health threats in their jobs.

"The environment is getting worse," Brooks said. Meanwhile, he added, "The manpower is going down and the demands are going up."

The firefighters at the meeting were clearly among the elders of Island departments, and they talked about the difficulty of recruiting young people into the field.

Pointing to the high costs of living on Long Island, Klein said the government could offer recruits some relief with their mortgages or property taxes.

Another suggestion was providing an incentive to high school students by offering them some sort of credit to train with the fire department, McDonough said. That, he said, would help create a pathway for young people to enter firefighting.

Officer struck in hit-and-run crash

A Suffolk County police officer was struck by a car Friday night in a hit-and-run crash in Brentwood that led to a police pursuit, authorities said.

The patrol officer, a 16-year veteran of the department, suffered nonlife-threatening injuries and was treated at Southside Hospital in Bay Shore and released, police said in a news release.

The officer was on foot in front of 147 Peterson St. in Brentwood as he responded to a call regarding a suspi-

cious vehicle around 11:15 p.m., police said. He was hit by a dark-colored sedan with out-of-state license plates, and the driver fled the scene.

Police are investigating whether the suspicious vehicle is the same car that struck the officer.

A police pursuit began, but no one was caught. The vehicle was last seen traveling north on Route 111, according to the release.

Additional information about the officer's injuries and the pursuit were not im-

mediately available.

Detectives are asking anyone with information to call the Third Squad at 631-854-8352 or anonymously call Crime Stoppers at 800-220-TIPS.

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers is offering a \$5,000 fast-cash reward for information leading to an arrest in the incident. The fast-cash reward of \$5,000 will be issued within 72 hours to anyone who provides information that leads to an arrest.

—STEFANIE DAZIO