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NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION

Waking America to the Importance of Sleep®

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NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION 2009 *Sleep in America*™ Poll HIGHLIGHTS & KEY FINDINGS

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The National Sleep Foundation's 2009 *Sleep in America* Poll finds that almost one-third of Americans are losing sleep due to concerns about their personal finances and the U.S. Economy.

- Almost one-third (27%) say their sleep has been disturbed at least a few nights a week in the past month due to personal financial concerns (16%), the U.S. economy (15%), and/or employment concerns (10%).
- Surprisingly, other national and global issues are affecting their sleep to a much lesser extent: healthcare costs (8%), the war in Iraq or Afghanistan (6%), global warming/environment (3%), and/or the threat of terrorism (3%).
- More than half of people (54%) losing sleep over economic concerns also had difficulty with their feelings at least a few days a week in the last month.

Sleep Difficulties:

- Compared to others surveyed, people currently losing sleep are more likely to report:
 - That their sleep needs are not being met (46% vs. 23%);
 - They sleep less than 6 hours on a typical workday or weekday (35% vs. 14%); and/or
 - They have driven drowsy at least once a month in the past year (41% vs. 23%).

Effects on Health:

- Compared to their better sleeping counterparts, these people are more likely to report being unable to do the following because they are too sleepy:
 - Work well and efficiently (25% vs. 9%);
 - Exercise (30% vs. 10%);
 - Eat healthy (22% vs. 6%);
 - Have sex (16% vs. 7%); and/or
 - Engage in leisure activities (28% vs. 10%).

- They are more than twice as likely to miss family events, leisure activities or work functions due to sleepiness or a sleep problem (24% one or more times in the past three months vs. 11%).
- They are almost twice as likely than their counterparts to engage in the following unhealthy behaviors to help them get through the day when sleepy:
 - Eat foods high in sugar or carbohydrates (21% very likely vs. 11%); and/or
 - Smoke a cigarette or use tobacco (18% very likely vs. 10%);

About one-third (31%) of Americans experience mood difficulties that impacts their sleep and health. Specifically, they say they are worried, tense or anxious (24%); unable to control the important things in their life (15%); and/or sad, blue or depressed (13%) at least a few days a week in the last month.

Sleep Difficulties:

- Compared to others surveyed, these people are more likely to report:
 - Their sleep needs are not being met (43% vs. 23%);
 - They had a good night's sleep only a few nights a month or less (42% vs. 16%);
 - They sleep less than 6 hours on a typical workday or weekday (30% vs. 15%);
 - They use a “sleep aid” (43% at least a few nights a week vs. 26%); and/or
 - They have been told by a doctor they have/had a sleep disorder (25% vs. 10%).

Effects on Health:

- These people are more likely than others to report being unable to do the following due to being sleepy:
 - Work well and efficiently (28% vs. 7%);
 - Exercise (30% vs. 8%);
 - Eat healthy (19% vs. 7%);
 - Have sex (18% vs. 6%); and/or
 - Engage in leisure activities (29% vs. 8%).

Sleep problems are on the rise and Americans are seeking solutions – not always in the most productive or safest manner.

Sleep Duration:

- The number of Americans (20%) that report that they get less than 6 hours of sleep on average has increased significantly since 2001 (13%), while the number of Americans who report that they get 8 hours or more has decreased since 2001 (38% to 28%).

Sleep Difficulties:

- Insufficient sleepers are much more likely than their counterparts to report symptoms of common sleep disorders at least a few nights a week in the past month, specifically:
 - They are twice as likely to report symptoms of insomnia (89% vs. 42%);
 - They are three times more likely to experience symptoms of restless legs syndrome (33% vs. 11%); and/or
 - They are three times more likely to have quit breathing in their sleep (sleep apnea) (14% vs. 4%).

Effects on Health:

- Insufficient sleepers are significantly more likely to report being unable to do various healthy activities because they are too sleepy:
 - Work well and efficiently (21% vs. 9%);
 - Exercise (28% vs. 8%);
 - Eat healthy (23% vs. 7%);
 - Have sex (15% vs. 6%) and/or
 - Engage in leisure activities (30% vs. 7%).

Sleep Problems:

- There has been a significant rise in the number of people (64%) that report experiencing a sleep problem at least a few nights a week since 2001 (51%), with 41% reporting problems every night or almost every night.

Americans are waking up to the importance of sleep, but there is still more to be done; because actions are not necessarily following awareness.

Sleep, as Important as Diet and Exercise

- About four in ten (42%) agree that sleep is the most important (25%) or at least equally important as diet and exercise (17%) to overall health and well-being; however:

Reported Sleep Need:

- The average adult still is not getting the amount of sleep they say they need (7 hours and 24 minutes) to function at their best as they report getting only 6 hours and 40 minutes of sleep on a typical workday or weekday.

Discussing Sleep with a Healthcare Professional:

- While 64% of Americans report experiencing sleep problems at least a few nights a week within the past month, only 32% of all adults have ever discussed sleep with a healthcare professional. Significantly, in the group that has discussed sleep with a healthcare professional, almost one-half (42%) have/had a sleep disorder.

Accept it and Keep Going:

- When asked the likelihood of doing various activities to help them get through the day when they are sleepy, about three-fourths of people (76%) say they are at least somewhat likely to just accept it and keep going.

Unhealthy Behaviors to make it Through the Day:

- Additionally, a significant number of people use caffeine or unhealthy behaviors to help carry them through the day when they are sleepy, specifically:
 - Almost six in ten (59%) say they are at least somewhat likely to use caffeinated beverages;
 - About four in ten (41%) are at least somewhat likely to eat foods that are high in sugar or carbohydrates; and/or
 - About one in six (16%) are at least somewhat likely to smoke a cigarette or use tobacco.

Healthy Americans (80%) sleep better, engage in healthy behaviors, and have a better quality of life than those in fair or poor health (20%).

Sleep Difficulties:

- Those who are in good or better health are significantly less likely than their counterparts to report:
 - That their sleep needs are not being met (26% vs. 42%);
 - Say they had a good night's sleep only a few nights a month or less (18% vs. 48%);
 - Sleep less than 6 hours on a typical workday or weekday (15% vs. 39%); and/or
 - Have been told by a doctor they have/had a sleep disorder (10% vs. 32%).

Effects on Health:

- Those in good or better health are less likely than others to report that they are unable to do any of the following activities because they are too sleepy:
 - Work well and efficiently (10% vs. 27%);
 - Exercise (11% vs. 30%);
 - Eat healthy (8% vs. 21%);
 - Have sex (8% vs. 18%); and/or
 - Engage in leisure activities (11% vs. 28%).
- They are less likely to do the following activities to help them get through the day when they are sleepy:

- Eat foods high in sugar or carbohydrates (13% very likely vs. 20%); and/or
 - Smoke a cigarette or use tobacco (9% very likely vs. 17%);
- They are much less likely to be obese (27% vs. 46%).

Quality of Life:

- They are 3 times less likely to miss family events, leisure activities or work functions due to sleepiness or a sleep problem one or more times in the past three months (10% vs. 30%).
- They are significantly less likely to be not satisfied in their relationship, among those married or partnered (3% not satisfied vs. 9%) and/or with their job, among those employed (3% not at all satisfied vs. 10%).

Sleepy Americans are creating a major public safety problem – drowsy driving.

- More than one-half of adults (54%) reported that they have driven at least once while drowsy in the past year, with almost a third (28%) reporting that they do so at least once per month.
- For the first time ever, the poll found an association between drowsy driving and engaging in other unhealthy or unsafe behaviors. Chronic drowsy drivers that do so at least once per month are twice more likely than others to report that they are unable to do the following activities because they are too sleepy:
- Work well and efficiently (22% vs. 10%);
 - Exercise (23% vs. 12%);
 - Eat healthy (17% vs. 8%);
 - Have sex (17% vs. 7%); and/or
 - Engage in leisure activities (24% vs. 11%).

More information about the National Sleep Foundation’s *Sleep in America*™ polls and other sleep-related issues can be found at www.sleepfoundation.org.

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