

HEALTHY BULLDOG

Why you need lots of sleep

Middle school students should get a good night's sleep because it helps your physical and emotional growth, according to a sleep expert at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia.

Dr. Bhavna Sharma recently told the *Healthy Bulldog* that sleep is the time your body needs to recover from the day's stresses. People can be more irritable and have difficulty focusing if they don't get enough sleep, she said.

"We know that students who don't have enough sleep can have behavioral problems" such as anxiety and depression, Dr. Sharma said.

"It is also important for growth and very, very important



Illustration by Maribel Quino

for memory consolidation," or the way the brain stores key memories.

For instance, she said, anything that you learn during the day such as math or the violin is consolidated and focused in your brain while you sleep.

The pandemic has had a huge impact on sleep habits, Dr. Sharma said. It has caused some people to be anxious, making it hard for them to fall asleep.

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Silver linings to virtual learning

Hey, sixth graders! Welcome to Amy Northwest Middle School.

I hope you are enjoying your first couple of months as a sixth grader, virtually. This year is a lot different from what students originally thought it would be. It has affected AMY teachers, eighth graders, seventh graders, and, unfortunately, you.

No one envisioned themselves learning from home with a computer. But that doesn't mean it should stop you from enjoying your year. Even though we are all inside and learning from home, the school

is trying its best to provide more incentives and make virtual learning fun.

You may have difficulties with virtual learning, or you may not like it. It's hard to build friendships, join clubs, play sports, and participate in all sorts of fun activities because we are all at home. I know, because I have also missed my friends, sports, and clubs I love. So instead of dwelling on the negative, let's look at the positive. What are some positive things that you have gotten out of virtual learning and being

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Be sure to get enough sleep

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How much sleep should kids get? The American Academy of Pediatrics, a national organization for doctors specializing in the care of kids, recommends:

Kids between the ages of 6 and 12 should sleep between 9 and 12 hours every night. Teenagers need 8 to 10 hours a night.

Here are some tips from Dr. Sharma about how to develop good sleep habits:

- Do not drink any caffeine before bed or in the afternoon. It can keep you awake.
- Do not look at your phone or other screens at least 30 to 45 minutes before bed.
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Get enough exercise during the day. It should help you sleep better at night.

“In order to get more sleep, the main thing kids have to realize is that sleep is important,” Dr. Sharma said. —By Marcus Melton, Samuel Narvaez, and Healthy Bulldog staff

Other information about sleep

Here are additional questions and answers from the Healthy Bulldog’s recent interview with Dr. Sharma. The answers have been edited for length.

Q: Is it OK to sleep really late on the weekend?

A: That’s a tough question. Yes and no. Some people sleep late on the weekend to make up for what they missed during the week. This is called “sleep debt.”

The problem is if you sleep in too late on a Saturday or Sunday, you may not be able to fall asleep that night or the next night. Your sleeping patterns can be disrupted.



Illustration by Nishay Nettles

Q: Do you think teachers should allow students to sleep during class?

A: Probably not. A better solution would be to see why the student didn't get enough sleep at home. If students are over-scheduled it can impact their sleep. These activities include too much homework or activities after school.

Q: Can dreams impact your life?

A: Dreams are all normal and it is part of your REM sleep. Most of the time, we do not remember our dreams. Nightmares are common and nothing to be worried about.

Q: Are there breathing practices to help you sleep?

A: If you are a person that has trouble sleeping, there are many deep breathing exercises you can do to help you relax and wind down.

—By Healthy Bulldog staff

Working on the front line during COVID

The coronavirus pandemic has affected many lives globally. Dr. Bhavna Sharma has been working on the front line taking care of patients at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia since the start of the pandemic.

At first, it was challenging because of the severity of the disease, she told *Healthy Bulldog* reporters recently.

“It was scary, she said. “There was fear and a lot of hope [when] we saw people who were very, very sick get better. ... It taught us a lot.”

She also said that the pandemic taught her “how important teamwork is and to be in good communication with each other.”

Doctors work on teams with nurses, respiratory therapists, and many other people.

She also said she witnessed how important families are to a patient’s healing process, and “I hope to remember that in the future.”

Because COVID-19 is so contagious, hospital have had to limit family members who can visit.

—By Devon Prophet

Finding positives in virtual school

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at home?

Here are a few things I am happy about:

1. No bus fever. If you were planning to take the bus to get to school, then you won't have to. I'm happy to escape waking up early and waiting in the cold for the bus. I avoid being late to school because of a bus that is running late or is stuck in traffic.

2. Attention sleep lovers. None of you can argue that it isn't great to sleep in. I love getting extra sleep and not worrying about getting to school. Not only does school start later, but we get to have extra minutes to sleep in peace before having to get ready for virtual school. Those of you who are morning people have more time to do your own thing such as yoga.

3. Staying home! I personally enjoy staying home and learning. You can eat snacks if you're hungry and eat lunch in the comfort of your own home. You have more time to focus on your homework, pro-



Illustration by Alland Adorno



jects, or classwork with fewer distractions. You also don't have to wear a school uniform and you get to dress comfortably.

The *Healthy Bulldog* would like to hear from you. Tell us what you are able to get out of virtual learning. What are some negative effects of it? How has it affected you or changed your daily routine? Contact Mrs. Judge or Mrs. McKenna with your ideas.

—By Maribel Quino

Adapting to AMY during pandemic

The coronavirus has interfered with everyone's life and plans. Middle schoolers have definitely been affected.

The *Healthy Bulldog* interviewed a couple of sixth graders, who haven't yet had a class inside AMY Northwest's building. The pandemic has meant that students have learned virtually since the start of the school year.

In interviews, several sixth graders said it is hard to communicate virtually. They face daily challenges with technology or internet problems. They find it hard to develop friendships, communicate, and learn. They said they would rather attend school in person than learn virtually.

"It's not the same as it would be in class," said Jayana Sanders. "We could be communicating with our classmates better and actually meeting everyone in person."

"A con in online school is, I don't know how to work Google Classroom that well, which makes it

hard to do work," said Aubrey Drummond. "I miss going to school in person."

Zimora Elijah said that "looking at a screen for so long can hurt your eyes."

Despite the challenges of online learning, students offered some positive comments about their first weeks at AMY.

"I'm absolutely loving AMY," Aubrey said. "The staff at Amy are so caring and loving, I'm so glad I got accepted."

—By Maribel Quino and Andell Quartey staff

AMY Northwest Healthy Bulldog

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The *Healthy Bulldog's* faculty advisors are Mrs. Judge and Mrs. McKenna. AMY Northwest's School Principal is Mrs. Floyd.

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Reflecting about a year like no other

Editor's note: AMY students submitted essays to compare how life is different from a year ago before the pandemic. These are excerpts from a sample of the essays the Healthy Bulldog received recently. Mrs. Judge will be sending out ideas for other topics soon. But if you have something you want to write about, we'd welcome your submission.

A year ago, I remember a normal life, life without masks required, waking up, attending school, having fun with my friends every day. Now we can't even go outside without a mask. I never get to see my friends and school is online. I'm subjected to sitting in front of a screen for hours, which isn't that motivating! I would have to say life today isn't the same and I am looking forward to life going back to normal if that's even possible.

—By *Samyah Evans*

My life a year ago was much easier. It was more fun when I was in elementary school and all I had to do was a couple of assignments. I miss having recess to play with my friends. But I know that, with time, things will get better.

—*Shayah Hunt*

The best thing that has happened to me during the pandemic is that I have gotten a new computer. I use this new computer all the time for my schoolwork and having fun. Many things have changed since last year about me. I have grown to be more serious about the things I do. I have done more schoolwork than I have when I was in 7th grade. My music taste has changed too. I used to listen to a lot of EDM. Now I listen to more Trap remixes and lo-fi.

—*Aaron Rivera*

I celebrated my birthday on March 30, 2020. It was definitely a weird birthday. We couldn't go anywhere because we had just started a citywide quarantine in Philadelphia. At first, I was angry that I couldn't go anywhere that I planned to go for my birthday. However, I was grateful that my mom had planned and surprised me with things for my birthday and I will never forget it.

On March 30, 2019, I went everywhere for my birthday without worrying about staying six feet away from others or having a mask. I realize that there were some good times back then and we tried to



Illustrations by Ethan Adorno

make it fun. I hope that 2021 will be much better than 2020. I wish that everything can go back to normal soon.

—By *Takayla Bell*

My life today and my life a year ago are totally different in so many ways. One way in which my life is different is that I am not attending in-person school. One other thing that is different is that I am not going to many places because of Covid-19. One thing that is similar is that I live in the same house and I still wear the same shoe size as last year.

—*Layla Graham*

My life from a year ago versus my life today is different in many ways. Last year I was actually attending school with my fellow classmates, and this year I have to interact with them virtually. The global pandemic caused everyone to stop going to school in person on Friday, March 13.

Last year there was no global pandemic that can kill thousands and thousands of people while this year we have a virus going around known as the coronavirus that is killing many people and causing everyone's life to change.

One thing that has been the same since last year is my hair color. I haven't changed my hair color since last year, so it's the same black color till this day. Another thing that is still the same is my shoe size. I still have the same shoe size that I had last year this year. All in all here are some things that have changed and stayed the same about me from a year ago versus my life today.

—*Bahiyah Jones*