

YOUR DENTIST CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

# Sleep is vital to your health — particularly now

Having been in practice many years, I can tell you one of my greatest rewards is helping my patients achieve optimum oral health and by extension overall good health. It requires regular checkups, plus a healthy diet and regular exercise.

Often overlooked, however, is the importance of good sleep habits — and why I have added this treatment emphasis to our practice. In order to fight off infections — like coronavirus — your body needs adequate sleep. Studies show that people who don't get enough quality sleep are more likely to get sick after being exposed to a virus. Moreover, lack of sleep can affect how fast you recover if you do get sick. During sleep, your immune system releases proteins called cytokines which

can help promote sleep. But that's not the whole story. Cytokines need to increase when you have an infection or inflammation, to help keep you healthy. Sleep deprivation may decrease the production of these protective cytokines — plus actually reduce infection-fighting antibodies in your system. On top of this, lack of sleep increases your risk



**Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick**

of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. If you have been keeping up with this pandemic, you know these are underlying health conditions

that can increase the risk of fatality.

Make this your goal. Aim for 7-8 hours of good quality sleep each night. The operative word is quality. More isn't necessarily better. Poor sleep for 10 hours is not as effective at boosting your immune system as 7 hours of quality sleep where you stay asleep — not tossing and turning on the edge of wakefulness. What's more, wakening several times through the night is detrimental to people's positive moods. And we all need to keep our spirits up — knowing this too shall pass. If you are having difficulty sleeping there are natural solutions that can help without resorting to medication. I know, personal demands can make it tough to relax and get enough sleep. Nevertheless, here are natural solutions that can help: Minimize Light and Sound. Darkness causes your brain to release melatonin for a sleepy effect. Don't expose your eyes to light from smartphones or TVs right before you go to bed. Stick to a Routine. Get up and go to bed at the same time every day. Keep Your Stress Level Low. Use meditation or prayer if it has a calming effect. You can turn off the news. And don't let others dictate how much stress you have. Right now,

more than ever, it's important to do our best to keep ourselves healthy. And quality sleep is... essential. Our practice is experienced in helping patients with sleep issues. Call us if you have questions. We are always here for you and your family. Think of us as your hometown resource for guidance and support.

*Dr. Gabrielle F. Cannick is the owner of Grand Oaks Dental, located at 3905 Liberty Highway in Anderson. A strong believer that dental fear and anxiety should not prevent any patient from receiving the highest quality dental care, Dr. Cannick has received extensive training in Sedation Dentistry and is a certified member of the Dental Organization for Conscious Sedation. She is also a member of the South Carolina Dental Association, the American Dental Association, the Academy of General Dentistry, and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.*

*For more information about Grand Oaks Dental and the services provided, please call 864-224-0809, or click to [grandoaksdental.com](http://grandoaksdental.com) or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrandOaksDental>.*

## Give the gift of reading

It is a well-known fact that reading to young children (even babies!) can have a remarkable impact on their ability to perform well in almost every phase of life. For many years, research psychologists have stressed that, "what happens in the first few years will set the stage for the rest of the child's life." Studies have repeatedly revealed that children who are consistently read to develop better communication skills, patience, empathy, social skills, literacy, creativity, a love for reading, and have a greater thirst for knowledge

As a teacher, I know this to be true. However, as a mother and a teacher to small children, I realize that accomplishing this daily routine is sometimes easier said than done. To put it mildly, young children are not programmed to sit still quietly for 20 or 30 minutes while a chapter book (with no pictures) is being read aloud to them. A few adjectives that come to mind are fidgety, squirmy, looking around/appearing unfocused, arguing with each other, etc.

The good news is, I have recently found a solution that has made a big difference with my story-time experience, and hopefully you will find it help as well. While discussing this with a friend, her advice was, "Since small children find it hard to sit still and concentrate on a story for long periods of time, allow them to work quietly on something fun while you are reading to them." While this sounds simple, it really works. A few quiet activities you may want to try are drawing or coloring, Magnatiles, Legos, Lincoln Logs, and Play Doh.

Although a bit hesitant at first, fearing that they wouldn't really be listening to the story, I decided to give it a try. After collecting their drawing books and colored pencils, they both climbed into bed with me. As I read to them from a chapter book, they quietly sat beside me and began to draw. To my amazement, my girls enjoyed the experience as much as I did.

They'd stop drawing every so often and ask me questions about what I was reading, or to express their thoughts about what was happening in the story. Over the next several weeks, we repeated this process until all twenty-eight chapters were read. The lesson learned for us was clear, "As long as their hands are busy, their ears will remain open."



**Katie Laughridge**

Below are a few book suggestions to get you started:

- The Vanderbecker Series by Karina Yan Glasser
  - Charlotte's Web by E.B. White
  - Harry Potter Series by J.K. Rowling
  - Roald Dahl books: Matilda, The BFG, and The Witches
  - Little House on the Prairie Books by Laura Ingles Wilder
  - Magic Tree House Series by Mary Pope Osborne
  - The Boxcar Children Series by Gertrude Chandler Warner
  - Henry Huggins and Ramona Series by Beverly Cleary
  - Like Pickle Juice on a Cookie, Like Carrot Juice on Cupcake, Like Bug Juice on a Burger books by Julie Sternberg
  - How to Train Your Dragon Series by Cressida Cowell
  - American Girl books
- I hope you will enjoy the "magic" of reading with your child as much as I do!
- "I will defend the importance of bedtime stories until my last gasp."
- J.K. Rowling



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