



Boston Children's Hospital
Community of Care
Preferred Pediatric Practice
Until every child is well™

Pediatric Associates of Medford PAM fall newsletter

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Is a Screen Interfering with Your Child's Sleep?

By Jeanne Clifford, M.D.

Does your child routinely have trouble falling asleep at night? Perhaps a screen in your household is to blame. Recent studies suggest that having a television in your child's bedroom or exposure to light from a computer screen just before bedtime interfere significantly with a child being able to fall asleep and to stay asleep throughout the night.

In a 2011 study performed by Seattle Children's Research Institute, children who were allowed to have a television in their bedrooms had (1) significantly more screen time use per day (2) were more likely to watch scary or violent content and (3) were significantly more likely to have delayed bedtimes, trouble falling asleep, and less overall sleep.

In 2012, researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute demonstrated that 2 hours' use of an iPad set to maximum brightness before bedtime was sufficient to suppress a normal person's production of melatonin. Melatonin is a chemical released by the body in the evening, to signal the body that it is time to sleep. Most computers,

including tablets, laptops, and desktops emit the same wavelength of light which is thought to interfere with melatonin production.

A new study, "[Sleep Duration, Restfulness, and Screens in the Sleep Environment](#)," published in the Feb-



If you think that perhaps your child's television use or computer use might be the reason for his or her sleep problems, you may want to consider the following ideas:

- (1) Do not allow your child to have a television or computer in his or her bedroom.
- (2) As recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, limit your child's daily "screen time" to less than 2 hours per day.
- (3) Have an alternative activity planned for the hour or two before your child's bedtime. Books, puzzles, board games, art projects, or listening to music are all possibilities.

Of course, if your child continues to have trouble falling asleep, or staying asleep throughout the night, please let your child's doctor know. And, if you need help with implementing some of these recommendations about limiting screen exposure, do not hesitate to ask for advice. Our pediatricians and our primary care behavioral specialists are here to help!



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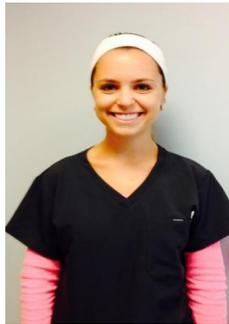
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Welcome Annie and Fadoua!

Annie Ottmann

Annie was born in the wonderful city of Chicago where she grew up with three older brothers. In high school she enjoyed dancing, playing soccer, and working as a camp counselor for many summers. Upon graduation, Annie went on to complete four years at



Indiana University and earn her bachelor's degree in Public Health. Six months after finish-

ing her undergraduate degree she started an accelerated bachelor's in a nursing program back in Chicago where she officially became a Registered Nurse, fulfilling a lifelong dream. Annie recently moved to the great city of Boston where she is learning all things Red Sox, Patriots, and Bruins! In her free time she enjoys traveling and surrounding herself with friends and family. Her guilty pleasures include crafting, reality TV, & Chicago style deep dish pizza. Annie is excited to experience everything that the Northeast has to offer and says that "if the clam chowder is any indication of how great this city is, I think I will be here for a long time!"

Fadoua Chabchab

Fadoua Chabchab is originally from Morocco and speaks



both French and Arabic fluently. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts Boston. Fadoua has worked in a sub-acute rehabilitation for two years, and in a dialysis clinic for six months. She also volunteered at Newton Wellesley Hospital. Fadoua likes reading, traveling, and meeting new people. She is excited about joining the team here at Pediatric Associates of Medford!

Please remember that our office is open 7 days a week, including both Saturdays & Sundays. We are open 8AM-7PM Mondays-Thursdays and 8AM-6PM on Fridays

Call us First Before Going to the ED!

Each year, hundreds of ER visits and expensive co-pays for our patients could be avoided with phone consultations and office or home based treatments. **Save your family the trip and the cost. Call us first before you go to the ER!**

Fever-Fever helps the body fight infection and is rarely harmful. It is important to know the additional symptoms. **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms**

Ear and throat pain-Both ear and throat pain are often

soothed with Ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Most ear infections resolve without antibiotics. **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms**

Bumped Heads-The majority of head injuries do not need imaging and heal spontaneously over time with physical and cognitive rest. **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms**

Croup- A barking cough can often be calmed with steam or night air. **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms**

Finger, Wrist, & Ankle Injuries-Many sprains and

strains can be treated with RICE (rest, ice, compression, Elevation). **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms**

Belly Pain-Serious causes of abdominal pain exist but are rare. Many children with belly pain are in fact constipated, even with a daily BM. **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms**

Lacerations-Many cuts can be closed in our office without stitches. **CALL US FIRST to discuss your child's symptoms!**

Easy Butternut Squash Risotto

Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 1 3/4 pounds)
- 1 cup microwavable brown rice (such as Uncle Ben's)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 2 teaspoons minced peeled fresh ginger (optional)
- 1 (14-ounce) can fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese, plus additional for

- garnish
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon freshly **ground black pepper**
- Preparation

1. Cut squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds and stringy flesh. Place the squash halves, cut sides down, on plastic wrap in microwave. Cook on HIGH 10 minutes or until cooked through. Scoop flesh into medium bowl, stir until smooth, and set aside

2. Microwave rice according to package directions, omitting butter.

3. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallot and optional ginger; cook 2 minutes,

stirring. Add rice.

4. Alternately stir in squash and broth, 1/2 cup at a time; wait until each is absorbed before adding more. Remove from heat; stir in 1/2 cup Parmesan, salt, and pepper. Serve in bowls; garnish with cheese, if desired.

Recipe from Health.com



Q & A from Psychological Care Associates: Myths About Starting College

1. Everyone is SO thrilled & excited about starting college, right? Wrong. This is just one of the many myths about the transition to college that warrant discussion. Here are some more myths:
2. Everyone adjusts easily to college.
3. Most kids don't get homesick.
5. Everyone parties at college so I have to also or I'll feel like an outcast.
4. Friends abound almost immediately at college.
6. I've got to pick a major ASAP or my future career is in jeopardy

Let's tackle these one at a time... **Everyone is SO thrilled & excited about starting college.** Sure, there usually IS excitement, but just as intense & common are feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or sadness. Maybe you're well aware of such feelings, or maybe you're noticing physical signs like unease, your heart racing, nausea, dizziness, trouble sleeping, or headaches.

These are possible signs of distress & anxiety, but are quite typical when facing a big life change. You may feel ashamed having such feelings or worries. Actually, most kids heading off to college don't share these reactions with each other

Other things that help include reminding yourself of all the ways you've coped well with past challenges, new situations, & stressors, & hopefully what you gained or how you grew as a result. With all the worry you are feeling now, you may fail to notice the ways that you are resilient, so take stock. Notice what helps you feel stronger under stress, & keep these in mind to use now & when you're at college.

COLLEGE...



since it's hard to admit even to oneself, let alone to someone else. Sharing these concerns with someone you trust is often a huge relief, even if it doesn't change the reality.

Everyone adjusts easily to college. Again, what you see on the surface is not always what is true. Most kids struggle with the adjustment & just don't want to feel embarrassed talking about it. Of course, the more outgoing you are by nature, the less stressed you may feel when faced with the prospect of having to make new friends, manage unknown roommates, & navigate a bigger, new setting. But even outgoing kids may feel scared or sad as they leave home & old



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“Taking care of the children in our community.”

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Pediatric Associates of Medford is a Preferred Member Practice of the Pediatric Physician's Organization at Children's Hospital (PPOC). The PPOC, as part of the renowned Boston Children's Hospital, actively works with member practices to improve the quality of care to the patients we serve and their families. Through educational workshops and Quality Improvement programs involving physicians and staff, we at Pediatric Associates of Medford work with the PPOC to serve you better.

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That every single kid you will meet is feeling some element of this, to one degree or another. This dovetails into the next, related Myth...

Most kids don't get homesick. How homesick you feel in the beginning is in no way an indication of how much you'll end up liking college & forming friendships. Homesickness is normal, no matter how old you are. Expect it; especially at night when you're drifting off to sleep, walking to class in the morning, or during downtime. That's why so many kids throw themselves into a lot of activity: it helps to distract yourself from feeling homesick or anxious, & that's a really good coping tool that also helps you make connections with other people & more readily find your niche. Rather than frequently calling home, try also confiding in someone at college; this will help you form stronger connections where you are.

Everyone parties at college so I have to too or I'll feel like an out-cast. Sometimes in a flurry of activity to distract from feeling nervous, homesick or sad, kids throw themselves into activities that aren't so adaptive—like partying too much. At many colleges, you'll find it's the fresh-

man who tend to do this much more than the older students, & that's one reason why. The other reason of course is that it can feel liberating at first to do what you want without concern about parents' supervising you & restricting your drinking & late-night hours. Just know that many freshman have no real desire to party a lot & are hoping that there are other kids like them. To find such kids, go to activities on weekends that don't revolve around partying. When you're at a party, look for the kids who are consuming moderately or not at all; they truly exist. And let's face it, the frat parties often attract those activities, so even *which* party you choose to go to affects how much you'll feel like you fit in.

Friends abound almost immediately at college. That's absolutely false. Many kids take a full year or two to find some good friends. You may find acquaintances early on that you meet up with here & there, but we all know the difference between feeling like you have a close friend vs passing time with others. Connecting on a deeper level with people is wonderful, precious, & by its very nature special—so it can't happen so easily. Some people just make it look easy because they're outgoing. The world is

filled with extroverts & introverts, & both types still take time finding their special circle of friends; the introverts just take a lot longer. If you're an introvert, don't beat yourself up: it's not an indication of your worth, your success in life, your eventual capacity for close friendship. It just takes you longer to find your kind. Push yourself to get out of your room; use organized activities to structure your social time so you have something to share & talk about with other kids; give **yourself** permission to feel lonely for a while; & remind yourself that you can handle this.

I've got to pick a major ASAP or my future career is in jeopardy.

Unless you're going to a specialty school (of Engineering, Art, etc), it's just a fact that kids often have no clue what career path or major they're going to end up with, & many change mid-stream. So relax. Now that you successfully got in to college, you have nothing to prove about this. But, do seek out a college advisor sooner rather than later, & tell them your situation. Ask them to help you keep an eye on the bigger academic picture & key decision-points along the way.