

SLEEP ON IT

TIPS ON GETTING A GOOD NIGHT'S REST



Get A New Lease On Sleep

(NAPSA)—Aches and pains. Bugs and fungus. Sounds like the downside of a camping trip. Not so. Instead, those are hazards most people face in their own beds.

According to health professionals, simply replacing your pillow can help alleviate a lot of those problems.

While experts recommend pillow replacement every one to three years, research finds most people buy new cars more regularly than they buy new pillows. Those older pillows not only offer little muscle support, they provide a home for organisms that live off the sweat and skin that transfer to your pillow while you sleep.

One of the greatest benefits new pillows offer is helping your spine maintain a normal cervical line, says Dr. Billy Yu-Ping Chiou, a physiologist with Southeast Pain Alternatives in Charlotte, N.C.

"Your cervical spine has a natural curve, and your muscles are affected when it straightens out for long periods of time—something that can happen while you sleep. A crick in your neck can be temporary, but long-term repercussions of continuous discomfort can affect your muscles, ligaments and bones," said Hunt, citing ramifications such as decreased range of motion; facet problems such as joint control; and spinal misalignment.

Different density pillows are best for different sleep positions, so choose your pillow based on how you sleep.

"If you sleep on your side, choose an extra firm or firm pillow that will fill in the distance between your shoulders and the bed," explained Randy Spence of Bedding Manufacturer Springs Basic Bed-



Studies show most Americans don't replace their pillows nearly often enough to prevent discomfort and health problems.

ding. "Back sleepers should select a medium-density pillow that offers the best head and neck support. Stomach sleepers should seek softer pillows."

The cost for comfort and health isn't very high, he said. A high-end feather and down pillow, such as a Serta Perfect Sleeper Down-Quilt, can cost about \$15, while you can buy a very good pillow—such as a synthetic fill pillow by Springmaid—at a retailer such as Wal-Mart for just \$7 to \$12.

If comfort isn't enough incentive to replace your yellowed, lumpy pillow, consider this: pillows are a haven for dust mites, yeast, fungus and mold. Newer pillows can help reduce exposure to these allergens, which can live in or grow on your pillow and pillowcase.

"You change your jogging shoes, you change your mattresses, you change anything that wears and tears and needs to be replaced," said Chiou. "There aren't a lot of recommendations for changing your pillow, but it's just as important."