

# A Breath of Fresh Air

A newsletter for Reliant Medical Group COPD patients and their families

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## Turn, turn, turn...

So here we are again, about to start celebrating another, hopefully joyous, holiday season. Before we know it, another year will have gone by and although it may not have been all good, most of us tend to remember only the good things. (I guess that's where the idea of the good old days comes from.) I have heard all kinds of predictions about what kind of winter to expect this year and have decided to only listen to those who promise us a relatively warm winter without too much snow!

In this issue, Dr. Kevin Martin would like to share with you important findings from some recent studies that show that lack of sleep is linked to a higher risk for catching a cold. These are important findings for you since they can help you reduce your chances of getting sick. Dr. Daniel Steigman has also written an article on oxygen therapy and COPD, a very important topic.

## Lack of sleep could lead to more colds

By Kevin Martin, MD

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, *The Washington Post's* "To Your Health" blog reported that research published online in the publication *Sleep* suggests that individuals "who sleep six hours a night or less are four times more likely to catch a cold than those who sleep for more than seven hours."

On its website, *NBC News* reported that investigators asked 164 healthy participants with an average age of 30 to wear an electronic device for one week to monitor their rest/activity cycles to establish their baseline sleep habits. Then, they sequestered the participants in a hotel and, using nasal drops, dosed each of them with a rhinovirus (the most common virus that causes colds). The investigators found that participants who had slept less than six hours a night the week before were 4.2 times more likely to catch a cold when compared to those who slept for more than seven hours a night. Participants who slept less than five hours were 4.5 times more likely to get sick, according to the study.

Also in September, *TIME* magazine reported that how many hours a person slept was one of the strongest predictors of whether or not study participants got sick – even more than other factors like a person's age, body mass, stress levels or emotional state. Clearly, how much sleep we get at night can impact our body's ability to fight off a cold. So, try to get a good night's rest, especially during the cold and flu season.



## Activity Trackers Can Help You Stay Active

If you are looking for a good present this holiday season here is an idea that will help improve your health without breaking the bank. Pam and I have been reminding you to stay active since it's so important both for your physical as well as mental health. Exercise very simply makes you feel better. So why not ask for an activity tracker? These are new devices that you wear like a watch or bracelet. They track every step you take, how many calories you have burned, and can even tell you how soundly you have slept. There are various devices on the market, the most popular, but not the cheapest, is called Fitbit. I suggest you let your kids or grandkids take this as a project for the holiday and choose the right one for you. They range in price from \$25 to more than \$200. Most of you will benefit from the simpler versions that don't track things you don't do anyway (like swimming or biking) and are therefore less expensive.



Words to live by.

**IF IT IS  
IMPORTANT  
TO YOU, YOU  
WILL FIND A  
WAY. IF  
NOT, YOU  
WILL FIND  
AN EXCUSE.**

