

Men want more sex and women want more sleep this “Fall-Back” weekend

New Better Sleep Council Canada survey uncovers a battle of the sexes in the bedroom

Toronto, October 28, 2008 — When the clocks turn back on November 2nd for Daylight Saving time, we all have a precious extra hour that night. But what will we do with it?

New Better Sleep Council Canada research shows that given the choice, 44 per cent of Canadians would choose to get some extra sleep while an equal 44 per cent would choose to use the hour for more sex. But when it comes to gender, more than half of women (55 per cent) would opt for sleep compared to 31 per cent of men, while nearly six-in-ten (57 per cent) of men would prefer to be having sex (versus 32 per cent for women).

“The battle of the sexes has become a battle over sleep or sex,” says couples counsellor Karen Hirscheimer, on behalf of the Better Sleep Council Canada. “This is a common theme in many relationships, and left unchecked it can turn the bedroom into more of a battleground than a love den. Canadians should take this time of year to think about what they can do to make the most of their time in bed, whether it’s for sleep or sex.”

“What is surprising is that we so often hear about people feeling dissatisfied with their sex life, and 45 per cent of Canadians say having more time would help them have better sex. But now with an extra hour, many are turning it down in favour of more sleep. This speaks to how sleep deprived our culture has become,” says Hirscheimer.

Sleep and sex: a vicious relationship cycle

According to the survey, a whopping 81 per cent of Canadians say they are disrupted by their partner’s sleep behaviour, and three-quarters (73 per cent) say their relationship is affected by a poor night’s sleep. Just under half (45 per cent) said they are likely to be rude or impatient with their partner after a bad night’s sleep.

The tension continues as women believe they are more mindful of their partner’s ability to get a good night’s sleep – 75 per cent believe so, compared to just 23 per cent of men who believe they are more considerate than women.

Given that more than half of women (58 per cent) say they are less interested in sex after a poor night’s sleep (compared to 43 per cent of men), infringing on the other’s ability to sleep does not help the matter.

“In a healthy relationship, sleep and sex should work together,” said Hirscheimer. “I see this with my patients all the time. If you’re not having sex, you lose energy and intimacy and become more irritable. And if you’re tired all the time, there’s a good chance you’ll be too tired for sex.

It’s a vicious cycle. Not only is sleep important for your health, it’s a key factor in your relationship.”

Bedroom as sanctuary...or is it?

Seven-in-ten (68 per cent) Canadians consider their bedroom a sanctuary from life's demands, suggesting that part of the solution to the sleep/sex dilemma is to focus on the bedroom itself.

But almost one third of Canadians are already sleeping separately from their partner all or some of the time to get a better night's sleep – 11 per cent are permanently in separate beds and 20 per cent sometimes move to the couch or another bed during the night.

Sixty-two per cent say a better bed would improve their quality of sleep, and a full quarter of Canadians say a better bed would improve their sex life.

Since the bed is typically the focal point of your room, and Canadians spend one-third of their lives on top of it, this suggests more attention should be paid to this critical piece of furniture.

“Your bedroom should be designed for sleep and sex, that's it,” says Hirscheimer. “So get rid of the stairmaster, laptop and turn off the TV. And because sleep is so important to maintaining a good mood and high energy levels, if a couple's bed isn't comfortable or big enough for both of them, they need to address this. It should help you sleep when you need it and have the most enjoyable sex when you're having it.”

Hirscheimer offers the following tips to help couples who are victims of the no sleep, no sex cycle:

- **Talk to each other.** If one wants to sleep and the other have sex, talk about each other's needs and find a compromise.
- **Keep conflict out of the bedroom.** The old saying of not going to bed angry really applies here.
- **Spend more quality time together, not just more time.** At the end of a busy day, reconnect and share the highlights together. Turn off the day's worries with bedtime rituals that will make you more relaxed and inclined to be intimate, like taking a bath or listening to music.
- **Be mindful of your partner's sleeping habits.** Be consistent and try to synchronize your bedtimes. Talk about what you both need to sleep better and figure out the best sleep positions that won't wake each other up.
- **Make your bedroom a sanctuary.** Your bedroom should make you think of sex or sleep. Get rid of the clutter, decorate it in colours you find soothing, and make sure it is cool, dark and quiet.
- **Invest in your bed.** Go bed shopping together and make sure you get the most comfortable and supportive one for both of you, so you'll want to spend quality time in it when you can. A mattress should be replaced every 8 to 10 years.

Other survey results

- Women consider themselves to be more mindful of their partner's ability to get a good night's sleep – 75 per cent believe so, compared to just 23 per cent of men who believe they are more considerate than women.
- Ontarians are the most likely to prefer sleep (49 per cent), while those in Quebec are most likely to prefer sex (52 per cent).

- Women (71 per cent) are more likely to agree that their bedroom is a sanctuary (versus 55 per cent of man).
- 11 per cent of Canadians think a bigger bed would make their sex life more exciting.

To learn more about the importance of getting a better night's sleep, visit www.bettersleep.ca.

About the survey

The survey was conducted for the Better Sleep Council Canada by Leger Marketing. As part of a national Omnibus survey, 1670 Canadian adults answered an online survey between October 7th and October 13th, 2008. Results from a sample this size can be considered accurate to within +/- 2.4%, 19 times out of 20.

Attention Editors and Photo Editors:

- Regional poll results available
- B-roll footage is available **today**: Satellite coordinates - **ANIK F2C3B from 2:00 - 2:30 p.m. EST**

About the Better Sleep Council Canada

Established in 2002, The Better Sleep Council Canada is committed to educating Canadians about the importance of sleep to good health and quality of life and to promote the value that a better quality mattress and foundation can bring when regularly replaced within the sleep environment. The Better Sleep Council Canada is comprised of over 450 manufacturers, retailers and component suppliers from the mattress industry.

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For more information:

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