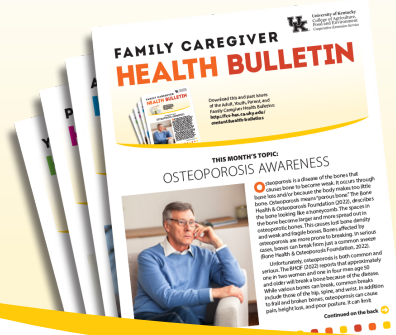




FAMILY CAREGIVER

HEALTH BULLETIN



MAY 2023

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

PAMPER WITH PAJAMAS



At the end of a long, productive day we can pamper ourselves and take a well-deserved break. Before getting into bed (or maybe right after we get home), most of us change into clothing designated for relaxing and sleeping — affectionately known as pajamas! Putting on comfortable pajamas is a great way to tell our brain that it's time to calm down and focus on our well-being. Research by Adam and Galinsky (2012) indicates that our clothing choices, including the physical experience of wearing them, affect our thought processes. So, let's embrace this connection and choose to pamper ourselves with comfortable pajamas we enjoy. This is a simple way to feel good and remind ourselves that we are important.

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In our February 2023 Family Caregiver Health Bulletin, we discussed choosing sheets for restful sleep; we have a physiological need for sleep (and clothing). And just like a satisfying set of sheets can support quality sleep, comfortable pajamas can promote relaxation and a feeling of calm (Kamala, et.al., 2013). The definition of what we perceive as “comfortable” is different for everyone, therefore, don’t settle on pajamas that interfere with your ability to relax. It helps to understand that how pajamas are made, including what they are made of, will affect the way pajamas feel and perform.

Fiber content of pajama fabrics

Small hair-like fibers create the yarns (or threads) used in the construction of pajama fabric. The comfort and performance of the fabric are determined by using either natural fibers (e.g., cotton) or manufactured fibers (e.g., polyester and rayon). Cotton fabrics are usually soft and breathable; however, if a person sweats at night, they tend to stay damp. Polyester fabrics are durable and easy to care for, and although they typically do not stay damp, they can trap body heat while we are under the covers. If you don’t like to “sleep hot,” then avoid polyester fabrics. Rayon fabrics (sometimes marketed as “bamboo”) have comfort properties similar to cotton, but do not stay damp, thereby making rayon a good choice for those who sweat or get hot while sleeping. In your pursuit to feel pampered and sleep comfortably, check the fiber content label of your pajamas to help you determine your best choice. If you are not feeling good in your pajamas, try some made with different fibers and fabrics.

Fabric construction and style

Pajamas can be made from woven fabrics or knit fabrics (in general, woven fabrics don’t stretch, knit fabrics do). Choose what is comfortable to you, keeping in mind that some fabrics may feel warmer or cooler. For example, a tightly woven, brushed “flannel” fabric may keep you warmer, whereas a loose-knit, stretchy fabric may keep you cooler. Again, as mentioned in the previous section, the fiber content (cotton, polyester, rayon, etc.) will contribute to the temperature-regulating properties. But how the fibers and yarns are constructed to

make the pajama fabric will impact the overall comfort. Use your personal preferences of “sleeping hot or cold” as a guide to find what you like.

Consider how you would sleep while wearing a nightgown vs. pajama pants vs. pajama shorts. What about long-sleeves vs. short sleeves? Do you like the feel of your sheets on your skin? Or do you prefer having a layer of fabric between you and your bedding? The important thing to know is that there are choices, and you may need to try a few different pajama fabrics and styles before you find what you like best. What is most comfortable to you? Which pajamas make you feel most pampered?

Caring for pajamas

Wash pajamas after a few sleeps, or more frequently if you tend to sweat at night. If possible, “air out” pajamas during the day by carefully hanging them on a hook or hanger (instead of stuffing them under the pillow). When it’s time to wash pajamas, follow the care label instructions for best laundry results and wash them with other lightly soiled clothing of similar weight and fabrics.

Although it may be tempting to sleep in your regular clothing, or wear your pajamas all day, you’re likely to be more productive if you wear clothing suited to your activity. Plus, when you change into your pajamas before bedtime, you’ll cue your body that it’s time to rest and recharge. Pamper yourself as you do this!

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