

# SWAN UPDATES

*April 2000*

## **SLEEP IN THE MID-LIFE**

Many of you have asked us whether sleeping patterns change in the mid-life. For the last few years, we have asked you to tell us about your sleeping patterns. Now we can give you some early information about what SWAN participants told us about their sleep in the 2 weeks before their first SWAN interview.

We asked you if your typical night's sleep was restful in the 2 weeks before your SWAN interview. About 80% of women reported that their sleep had been restful (sound, very sound or average). Only 20% said that their sleep had been restless or very restless. This was generally true for women of all ethnicities and ages.

We asked if you had trouble falling asleep in the past two weeks. Overall, 76% of you said that you rarely had trouble falling asleep (less than once a week). Only 5% reported that they had trouble falling asleep 5 or more times per week.

We wanted to know if you wake up several times a night. This seems to be the most frequent complaint, which is shown in the table below.

### ***DO YOU WAKE UP SEVERAL TIMES A NIGHT?***

<b>5 or more times a week</b>	<b>1-4 times a week</b>	<b>Less than once a week</b>	<b>Not in the past 2 weeks</b>
13%	33%	22%	32%

One possible reason for waking during the night is that women need to get up to urinate. The table below shows what SWAN participants reported about this aspect of their sleep.

### ***HOW OFTEN DO YOU USUALLY GET UP FROM BED TO URINATE?***

<b>More than once a night</b>	<b>Once a night</b>	<b>A few times a week</b>	<b>Once a week or less</b>	<b>Never</b>
10%	23%	19%	32%	16%

We also asked if you wake up earlier than you planned, and could not fall back to sleep again. Across the study, 13% reported that this happened 3 or more times per week. Most women (71%) reported waking up early less than once a week.

In future years, we will be able to see how sleep patterns change over time, and we will be exploring what factors might cause these changes. There are many possible reasons why sleep patterns might

change during this period of your lives. Here are a few reasons we will be examining in the next few years:

- Increasing age
- Changing stress levels at home and/or work
- Changing hormone levels
- Changes in your general health
- Mid-life symptoms
- Change in your habits (for example, exercise, smoking, or diet)

**“LET ME WRITE MYSELF A NOTE.....”**

In midlife, some women notice that they have difficulty concentrating or remembering things, but little research has been done in this area. To study this issue, a brief measurement of your concentration and memory has been added to the fifth SWAN visit. You will be asked to remember a brief story and repeat a list of numbers. It will take about five minutes. By measuring your concentration and memory at several SWAN visits, we hope to learn whether these skills change in midlife for some women and if so, what factors are linked to these changes.

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