Slumber affects our overall quality of life, and regularly getting a good night’s sleep has been linked to improved memory, weight control and better concentration. But what exactly happens after our head hits the pillow.

Sleep is far from a dormant, passive state. In fact, the brain and body are quite busy during those few hours. We move through five stages during each sleep cycle. These cycles last about 90 minutes. The process is repeated several times throughout the night.

The first four stages are grouped under non-rapid eye movement sleep. Stage 1 is a light sleep, when we are still aware of our surrounding and can be easily awakened. During stage 2, the heart rate slows and body temperature drops. Stages 3 and 4 are a deep sleep. Muscles are relaxed and breathing slows, but the body is hard at work repairing tissue, building bone and restoring energy.

The last stage, rapid eye movement sleep, is when dreams occur. During this phase, the eyes dart back and forth, the brain is active, and breathing becomes shallow. Muscles are temporarily paralyzed to prevent us from acting out of dreams.

The first REM stage lasts about 10 minutes, and then the cycle starts over. The REM stages get longer throughout the night and the final one can last up to an hour.

Harnett County Happenings:

- Sunday, March 8th Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Tuesday, March 17th is St. Patrick’s Day.
- Friday, March 20th is the First Day of Spring.
- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program will be offering free tax assistance for the elderly and disabled in Lillington, Erwin, and Coats. Please contact the Department on Aging at 910-893-7578 for more information about this program.
- Lillington Community Blood Drive sponsored by Harnett County Public Health & Harnett County RSVP is scheduled for Thursday, March 5, 2019 from 1:00 pm – 5:30 pm. Please contact LeAnn Blackmon at 910-814-6071 for more information or to schedule your appointment.

Italian Chicken Nuggets

**INGREDIENTS**
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, pounded thin and cut into 20 strips
- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- Barbecue sauce and/or honey mustard

**MAKE IT**
1. Dip chicken breast strips in egg whites and then in bread crumbs to completely cover.

2. Place chicken in nonstick baking pan, and bake until golden, about 20 to 25 minutes.

3. When chicken is cool enough to handle, serve with desired dipping sauce. Makes 4 servings (5 pieces each).

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 18, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at the Harnett County Division on Aging, Kitchen Area. (There is a schedule conflict so the meeting will be on a Wednesday this month) Our guest speaker will be Jan Rogers Center Director/Forensic Interviewer with the Harnett County Children’s Advocacy Center. Light refreshments will be provided. Please call Latorius Adams at (910) 814-6075 for more information.