

TOOLBOX TOPIC SLEEP



INTRODUCTION

Research is showing that encouraging staff to get a good night's sleep is one of the most effective ways to reduce workplace fatigue and improve workplace health and safety, so today's toolbox is all about sleep.

WHY IS SLEEP SO IMPORTANT? Sleep is an important biological function, essential for good health and wellbeing. During sleep the brain and body rest and recover.

HOW MUCH SLEEP DO ADULTS NEED? Sleep requirements stabilize in early adult life, around the age of 20. Individuals vary in their sleep needs but most adults require between 7 and 9 hours a night to feel properly refreshed and function at their best the next day.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR NOT GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

Mood - Not getting enough sleep can cause adults to be irritable and moody all day.

Behavior - Adults who are not getting enough sleep are more prone to risk-taking behaviors such as drinking alcohol and driving recklessly.

Work Performance - A decline in performance such as slower reaction times, failure to respond to changes, and the inability to concentrate and make reasonable judgments.

Thinking - Sleep deprivation can result in attention problems, memory problems, lead to bad decision making, slow down reaction time and stunt creativity.

Work Performance - Adults who are sleep deprived are more likely to do poorly in trade school, fall asleep during class, have multiple absences or be consistently late.

Driving Impairments - Lack of sleep can be highly dangerous, falling asleep while behind the wheel at the worst and increased accident risk from slower reaction times and being.

QUESTIONS TO GENERATE DISCUSSION

Some people cope with a lack of sleep much better than others. We all need different amounts of sleep - what is your magic number?

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SUPERVISOR/
MANAGER:

EMPLOYEE NAMES:

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MEDICAL CONDITIONS CAUSING SLEEP PROBLEMS

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea - affects 50% of adult men and 25% of adult women.

This means losing your ability to breathe freely. It happens over and over while asleep. It is caused by a narrow, floppy throat. Most people who have sleep apnoea snore too. The period when the sleeper has trouble breathing ends with them waking up. This arousal is often very brief with no memory of it. But arousing over and over like this disrupts sleep and causes excessive tiredness during the day. There are treatments that work. These include weight loss, cutting down on alcohol, dental devices and continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy. You should see your GP for a sleep review if you have bad snoring, your waking up with a choking sensation, your partner tells you are stopping breathing in your sleep and excessive daytime sleepiness.

Insomnia - Occurs In Around 30% Of Adults. Insomnia is when it is hard to get to sleep or stay asleep or where sleep poor quality. Often, the cause is discomfort from an illness. Other times, it can be feeling upset, sad or stressed. In these cases, what needs to be done is to get rid of the cause. But in other cases, there is no obvious cause. Here it can help to adopt good sleep habits. If this is not enough, there are more complex treatments.

TIPS TO MAXIMISE THE QUALITY OF YOUR SLEEP

- **Deal with the issues of the day while awake:** In the early evening spend no more than 20 minutes writing events of the day that concern you, along with potential solutions. Close the book and put it away.
- **Go to bed at the same time each night** and rise at the same time each morning, even on weekends.
- **Create a sleep-friendly physical environment.** Make sure your bedroom is a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment, which is neither too hot or too cold.
- **The bed should only be used for sleeping or sex.** Try not do other activities, such as reading, watching TV, or listening to music.
- **Remove all technology.** Remove TVs, Smartphones computers, and other “gadgets” from the bedroom. Do not use devices 1 hour before sleep time.
- **If you are not asleep after 20 minutes, then get out of the bed.** Find something else to do that will make you feel relaxed. Once you feel sleepy again, go back to bed.
- **Incorporate exercise into your daily routine.** It may help you fall asleep more easily and sleep more deeply. Take a break and go outside for some time every day, especially in the morning. Getting sun exposure helps your body keep its internal clock on track.
- **Eat meals regularly, and avoid going to bed on an empty stomach.** However, do not eat a full meal an hour before bed, and try to opt for a light snack instead.
- **Avoid caffeine** in the late afternoon or evening.
- **Reduce Alcohol.** Alcohol is not only bad for your overall health, but it also disrupts sleep. You may have night awakenings.
- **Smoking** also disrupts sleep. It is best for your health not to smoke at all, but try to not smoke for at least a hour before bedtime if you do.