

Preventing Healthcare Worker Fatigue

<http://yoursleep.aasmnet.org/hygiene.aspx>



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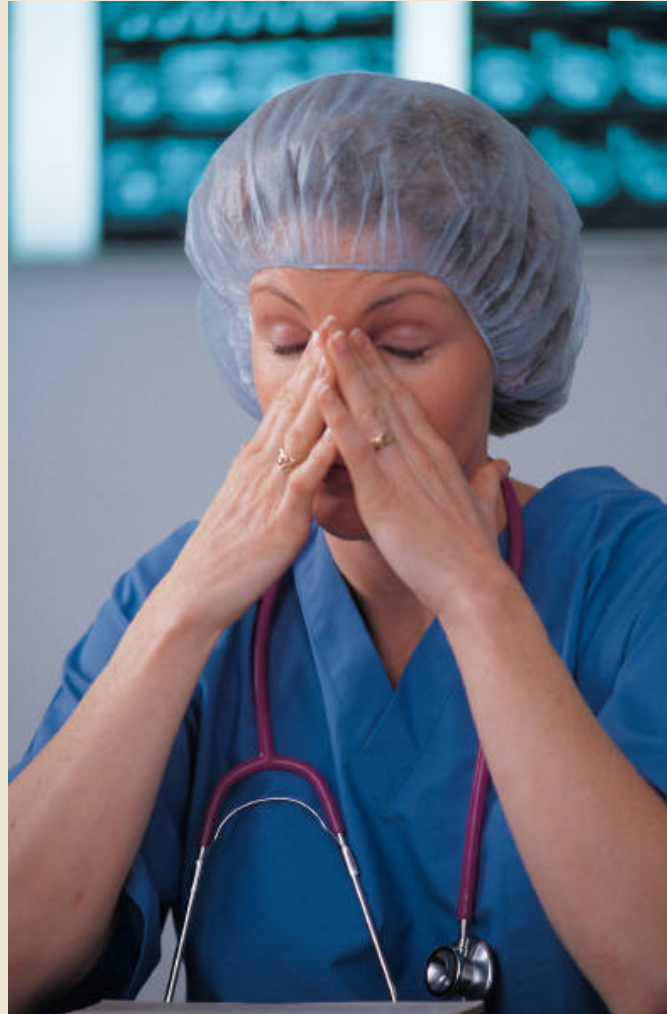


Fatigue

Do you ever
find yourself
feeling like this
at work?



Or like this?





What is Healthcare Worker Fatigue?

- 12-hour shifts have become a common practice in healthcare. These shifts help with continuity of care over the course of a day but not over the week.
- Rotating shifts are harder on healthcare workers than those that just work one shift; 60-80% of these workers suffer from chronic fatigue and sleep disturbances.
- Many feel that no matter how little sleep they get they will not fall asleep because their job is too important and they always stay busy. The reality is often they go into an involuntary sleep known as microsleep.





What is Healthcare Worker Fatigue?

- Fatigue is a feeling of exhaustion that interferes with the ability to fully perform physically or mentally.
- Fatigued people have decreased energy and reaction time, mood alterations, and impaired judgment.
- Fatigue can occur when staff work longer hours, skip their breaks, and care for an ever increasing ill population of patients with complex plans of care.





Common Signs of Fatigue

- Irritability
- Slowed physical and mental reactions
- Forgetfulness
- Inability to focus





Facts About Sleep

- The circadian rhythm is a 24 hour cycle controlled by the body that may be stimulated by factors outside of the body.
- The average adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep per day in order to allow our body to recuperate, both physically and mentally.
- As of 2002, the average amount of sleep people get on workdays is 6.9 hours.
- Caffeine consumptions should not exceed 3 cups of caffeinated beverages/day because it may make falling asleep more difficult.
- Exercise (at least 30min 3x/week) improves sleep.
- Sugar gives a short burst of energy but then creates a “crash”.



How Sleepy are You?

The Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS)

How likely are you to doze off or fall asleep in the following situations, in contrast to feeling just tired? This refers to your usual way of life in recent times. Even if you have not done some of these things recently try to work out how they would have affected you. Use the following scale to choose the most appropriate number for each situation:

- 0 = would *never* doze
- 1 = *slight* chance of dozing
- 2 = *moderate* chance of dozing
- 3 = *high* chance of dozing

SITUATION	CHANCE OF DOZING
Sitting and reading	
Watching television	
Sitting inactive in a public place (e.g. a theater or meeting)	
As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break	
Lying down to rest in the afternoon when circumstances permit	
Sitting and talking to someone	
Sitting quietly after a lunch without alcohol	
In a car, while stopped for a few minutes in the traffic	
TOTAL SCORE	

SCORE RESULTS:

- 1-6** Congratulations, you are getting enough sleep!
- 7-8** Your score is average
- 9 and up** Very sleepy and should seek medical advice





Facts about Inadequate Sleep

- <5hrs of sleep in 24hrs causes a decline in cognitive abilities
- Missing a day/night of sleep causes a 25% decline in cognitive performance, which increases to 40% if 2 days/nights are missed
- An accumulated loss of 1 hour of sleep per night can decrease concentration
- 50-70 million people have undiagnosed sleep disorders





Consequences of Inadequate Sleep/Long Work Hours

- Falling asleep at work
- Medical errors
 - Fatigue-related errors cost about \$100 million per year
 - Number of errors changes depending on shift worked and how many shifts/hours worked in a row.
- Staff injuries
 - Higher rates of musculoskeletal injuries, cardiovascular disease, and poor perceived health
 - 100,000 car crashes, 40,000 injuries, and 1,550 fatalities each year due to “drowsy driving”



An Actual Road Sign





Fatigue Countermeasures

- Routine practice of healthy sleep hygiene measures
- Adequate Sleep and planned naps
- Rest Breaks
- Plan scheduled shifts wisely
- Bright Light
- Exercise
- Use of Caffeine



Sleep Hygiene

Behaviors to avoid:

- Having caffeine within 6 hours of bedtime
- Having alcohol within 6 hours of bedtime
- Watching television right before going to bed
- Having a cigarette before bedtime
- Going to bed hungry or when you've had a big meal
- Going to bed before you are sleepy
- Exercising too close to bedtime

Behaviors to adopt:

- Using your bedroom only for sleep and sex
- Exercising regularly, preferably in the morning or early afternoon
- Keeping a regular bedtime and waking time, even on the weekends
- Creating a relaxing bedtime routine, such as taking a leisurely stroll, soaking in a tub, listening to soothing music, or massaging your legs or feet before bed
- Practicing relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and deep-breathing exercises
- Creating a comfortable environment that is conducive to sleep by eliminating uncomfortable bedding, wearing loose clothing, keeping the bedroom temperature slightly cool, and eliminating any bothersome noise or light



Adequate Sleep & Planned Naps



- Plan to get enough **sleep**/ rest prior to and/or after your work shift.
- A **nap** prior to shift start may be helpful for those working the night shift.
- Maintain a **balance** of work, rest and other activities. The old saying “Don’t burn the candle at both ends” is very true.



Rest Breaks

- Although napping during work hours may not be feasible, laboratory and field studies suggest that naps as short as 15 min are quite effective in increasing alertness during extended work periods or at night



Departments should negotiate if this is appropriate with their manager.



Shift Planning

- Allow adequate recovery time between shifts
- Avoid working more than 3 consecutive night shifts



Bright Light

- Bright light in work areas– can increase alertness at night and facilitate entrainment to night shift work



Exercise

- Exercise – typically produces increased subjective alertness and improved cognitive performance in both those sleep-deprived and nonsleep-deprived.
- Chair exercises, stretching exercises, or walking can be easily accommodated in the work place

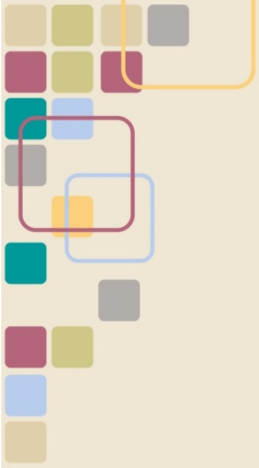


Use of Caffeine



- Caffeine should not be consumed on a regular basis or when alert - Instead, consume caffeine during periods of decreased alertness
- Stop Caffeine consumption **6 hours** before planned bedtime to reduce the possibility of insomnia





More Resources

Activity Bursts : <http://abeforfitness.com/browse-office-videos-1-date.html>

Sleep Health Check : <http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/sleep-disorders-health-check/default.htm>

Sleep Quiz : <http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/rm-quiz-sleep>

