

# FATIGUE MANAGEMENT/BETTER SLEEP HEALTH

**MBCR is committed to providing its employees and their families with comprehensive programs and services that will help manage their health and well-being.**

**Please feel free to share this health newsletter with your loved ones.**

**Health Programs:**  
Stay tuned for updates!

**Phone Numbers:**

**Employee Assistance:**  
888.908.6227; or  
800.451.1834

Harvard Pilgrim:  
888.333.4742

Aetna:  
877.238.6200

VSP:  
800.877.7195

Human Resources:  
617.222.8084 and  
617.222.8234

HR Concepts:  
877.647.1147

ING:  
800.584.6001

Operation REDBLOCK:  
(Mark-Off call only)  
877-9RBLOCK

The content of this newsletter is not meant to replace professional medical advice or service. Please consult with your regular physician for personal health and fitness concerns.



### ***Sleep is a Key Part of a Healthy Lifestyle.***

Like eating right and exercising, sleeping well is essential to combating fatigue and feeling your best during the day. Getting consistent, quality sleep, as part of an overall healthy lifestyle, can help prevent the onset of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Sleep affects both your physical and emotional health, your relationships, your productivity and safety, and your overall quality of life. While you sleep, your brain goes to work, consolidating the day's learning into memory and reenergizing the body.

Sometimes getting enough sleep can be quite challenging due to our work schedules, caring for our family, spending time with loved ones, keeping up with household maintenance and errands, participating in many activities, and other various commitments.

Having said that, there are many ways that we can manage fatigue and our sleep time to feel replenished and healthy.

### ***What are Some Common Symptoms of Fatigue?***

- Simply feeling sleepy or lethargic.
- Having difficulty keeping your eyes open.
- Constantly yawning.
- Lack of focus or motivation.
- A bad mood or feeling irritable.
- Headaches and sore muscles or joints.

*Note: Sometimes chronic fatigue can actually be a symptom of a medical condition (rather than just from lack of sleep). As a reminder, it's very important to get a comprehensive physical exam every year. The value of those exams cannot be underestimated. Always feel free to call your regular doctor for advice and/or to make an appointment if you are experiencing any unusual symptoms or have any health concerns.*



## How Much Sleep Do I Need?

The sleep requirements for each person depend on many factors, including age. For example, in general:

- Infants require about 16 hours a day.
- Teenagers need about 9 hours on average.
- Most adults need 7 to 8 hours a day.
- Some adults may need as few as 5 hours a day.
- Others require 10 hours of sleep each day.
- Pregnant women need more sleep than usual.

However, experts say that if you feel drowsy during your waking hours, even during boring activities or tasks, you haven't had enough sleep. The amount of sleep a person needs also increases if he or she has been deprived of sleep in previous days.

Getting too little sleep creates a "sleep debt" which is much like being overdrawn at a bank. Eventually your body will demand that the debt be repaid. Rather than loading up on extra caffeine every day (which provides only temporary relief from fatigue and drowsiness), practice getting a good night's sleep on a regular basis.

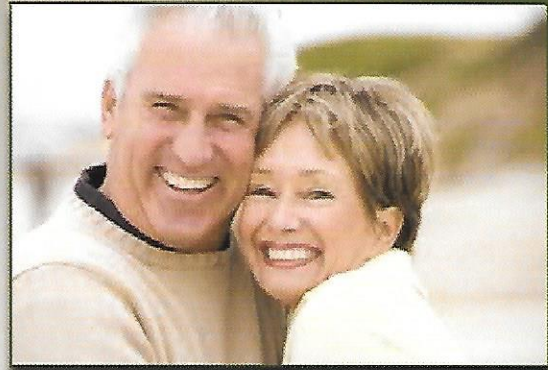
## The Risks of Sleep Deprivation

Many studies make it clear that sleep deprivation is dangerous. Sleep-deprived people, who are tested by using a driving simulator or by performing a hand-eye coordination task, perform as badly as or worse than those who are intoxicated.

Sleep deprivation also magnifies alcohol's effects on the body, so a fatigued person who drinks will become much more impaired than someone who is well-rested.

Driver fatigue is responsible for an estimated 100,000 motor vehicle accidents and 1,500 deaths each year, according to the *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*. Since drowsiness is the brain's last step before falling asleep, driving while drowsy can lead to disaster. The *National Sleep Foundation* says that if you have trouble keeping your eyes focused, if you can't stop yawning, or if you can't recall driving the last few miles, you're probably too drowsy to drive. Find a safe place to pull over and assess your situation. Call a friend or family member, or dial "9-1-1" for urgent assistance.

## HOW TO GET QUALITY SLEEP



### \*\*\* Key Points \*\*\*

- *Make bedtime and waking a routine schedule to get the amount of sleep you know you need.*
- *Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, including on weekends. Consistency is important.*
- *If your daily routine doesn't allow you to maintain a regular sleep schedule, it's vital that you make an extra effort to get in the same number of sleep hours each day.*
- *Ensure your sleeping environment is dark, quiet, comfortable, and not too warm.*
- *Don't watch anything on television that may upset, scare, or worry you prior to going to bed.*
- *Do something relaxing before bedtime (see the back page for relaxation techniques).*
- *Don't toss and turn in bed. Instead, get up and do something quiet (such as reading a book, listening to a relaxation CD, etc.) until you are sleepy.*
- *Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol prior to bedtime.*
- *Avoid eating heavy meals and avoid drinking lots of fluids close to your bedtime to reduce late-night bathroom use.*
- *Don't think about problems at bedtime. This will definitely impede you from falling asleep.*



## Employee Assistance Program ("EAP") Corner

### Be Safe and Have Fun This July 4th!

Courtesy of American Addiction Centers

Summer is about to kick off, and July 4<sup>th</sup> is just around the corner. Get ready to celebrate with family and friends, and enjoy cookouts, picnics, and fireworks. Have fun, but remember to stay safe.

Did you know that alcohol-related car accidents are higher on July 4<sup>th</sup> than most days of the year, when binge drinking is a particularly prevalent problem?

The EAP Representatives at American Addiction Centers can help manage sobriety during the holiday season by providing:

- Confidential support from a skilled professional
- Holiday stress management tips and education
- Alcohol and drug education programs

As we inch closer to July 4<sup>th</sup>, please take a quick moment to learn more about American Addiction Centers and how the EAP can help you or your loved ones.

### Celebrate with positivity.

American Addiction Centers says: "Binge drinking, which is highly common on July 4<sup>th</sup>, can cause bodily harm. The liver, which processes about 95% of the alcohol that is consumed, can metabolize only about one drink per hour. Reach out for more information on binge drinking, drunk driving, and how to get home safely from your July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities!"

To get in touch with an American Addiction Centers EAP Representative available through the **24-hour, confidential, toll-free phone line** dedicated to MBCR employees and their families, call **1-888-908-MBCR (6227)**.



American  
Addiction Centers

## Exercise Promotes Better Sleep

*We all know that exercise provides many benefits for your body and mind. Did you also know that getting regular physical activity will help you sleep more deeply? You don't have to be a star athlete to reap the advantages. Doing even just thirty minutes of daily physical activity will help you to fall asleep quicker, stay asleep, and get more quality sleep. And you don't need to do all thirty minutes in one session. You can break it up into five minutes here, ten minutes there, etc. As long as you consistently keep active during the day, you will reap the rewards.*

### CHECK OUT THE IDEAS BELOW:

- Walk up and down a flight of stairs several times a day at work and home.
- Park at the far end of any parking lot when you do errands or grocery shopping. Make a habit of "power walking" while you get your items and/or groceries.
- Take brisk walks through the hallways of your work office building or around "safe areas" at your work site.
- If you belong to a gym, schedule in thirty minutes a day (*make those monthly dues work for you!*). Do activities you enjoy, such as using weights, the treadmill, aerobics, etc.
- Do regular house cleaning. Listen to your favorite music while you do chores to make the tasks less boring.
- Take your dog for walks around the neighborhood or up the local dog park.
- Finish your daily exercising a few hours before going to bed, giving your body time to recover from the stimulation.
- Do some jumping jacks, leg squats, leg lunges, or push-ups during TV time at home.

## Relaxation Techniques for Better Sleep



If you make a consistent effort to relax and unwind before bed, you will sleep easier and more deeply. A peaceful bedtime routine sends a powerful signal to your brain that it's time to wind down and let go of the day's events and/or stressors. **Below are some relaxing bedtime rituals to try:**

- \* Read a book or light-hearted magazine by a dim light.
- \* Listen to soft and soothing music.
- \* Take a warm bath or shower to ease sore or tight muscles.
- \* Do some very gentle stretching or yoga.
- \* Work on a quiet, non-stimulating activity or hobby.
- \* Practice deep, slow breathing with your eyes closed.
- \* Visualize a peaceful, restful place that calms you.

**Helpful Web Resources:** [www.railroaderssleep.org](http://www.railroaderssleep.org) and [www.healthysleep.med.harvard.edu](http://www.healthysleep.med.harvard.edu)

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