

The importance of sleep

Welcome to this week's Safety Hour

The focus this week is the importance of sleep

Why We are Tired

Our society runs 24/7.

Shops stay open late or even all night to meet our need for flexibility and convenience. Newspapers arrive by six.

We can check our email or shop online anytime of the day or night.

And our Mobile phones keep us in touch with others around the clock.

Even with standard work hours we don't always have enough time to rest. Our daily life often has a big to-do list: spouses, kids, pets, housework, sports, entertainment, and socializing all take another bite out of the day

Physical Symptoms

- Drowsiness, Yawning Eyes closing or getting sore
- Vision going out of focus or blurring
- Slower physical reaction time, Micro sleeps

Mental Symptoms

- Poor concentration, including wandering thoughts
- Inability to remember things you've just done, seen, or heard
- Failure to respond to changes in your surroundings or situation
- Less alertness and watchfulness

What This Can Do

All these factors contribute to fatigue, and fatigue affects performance, whether at work or at home. For example, the Royal Automobile club (RAC) reports that fatigue is a factor in over half of single-vehicle collisions — one good reason rumble strips are put on roads. Lack of sleep has also contributed to some tragic workplace incidents. Home life is affected, too: fatigue is one of the causes of irritability or depression, and it can have a negative impact on our lives

Sleep Better/Sleep Longer Sleep Disruptors

Here are some things to avoid, if possible, as they can get in the way of a good sleep:

- Caffeine, Nicotine, Alcohol, Big meals before bed
- Stress from work or home life, Daytime naps (over 20 minutes)
- Changing your sleep routine on days off

Sleep Tips

- Don't go to bed if you're not tired, Don't associate your bed with tasks that need concentration — leave the bills, textbooks, and computer outside the bedroom.
- Set up a **good sleep environment**, Get regular exercise (but not right before bed) Give yourself a transition time before going to bed (e.g., a ritual such as watching a favourite TV show or doing some light reading) Take a relaxing dip in a hot tub or bath, or take a nice warm shower.
- If you don't fall asleep within 15 minutes, get out of bed and don't go back unless you're tired.
- If you don't fall asleep, don't get worked up about it — that just makes it worse.