

## Fatigue and how it affects you

### Welcome to this week's Safety Hour

The focus this week is **Fatigue** and how it can affect you.

#### What is fatigue?

Fatigue is defined as an acute and/or ongoing state of tiredness that leads to mental or physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries.

#### What are the health risks associated with fatigue?

1. Higher risk in terms of accident causation.
2. Higher levels of anxiety and depression.
3. Impaired cognitive function and memory.
4. Higher rate of high blood pressure and heart disease.
5. Higher risk of diabetes.
6. Increased risk of breast cancer.
7. Higher risk of stroke.
8. Greater appetite for unhealthy food cravings.
9. Greater risk of chronic sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnoea, narcolepsy.

### Why do we sleep?

More than exercise, diet and wealth, science has shown that sleep is the most important factor to our physical and mental wellbeing.

#### How much sleep do we need?

Just as we all vary in how quickly alcohol affects us and how easily we lose or gain weight, we also differ in the amount of sleep that we need to perform optimally. Most adults need 7 to 8 hours of sleep in every 24 hours to be at their best, and a small proportion need as little as 6 hours or as much as 10 hours sleep.

#### The consequences of sleep loss

Has shown that for most people even one night of six hours sleep will lead to impaired performance the next day. Obviously the more sleep deprived we are the more impaired we become.



## Fatigue and how it affects you

Fatigue can have an impact on your ability to work safely in your working environment and stay on top of your work.

It can affect your physical and mental ability and can result to impaired judgment, slower reflexes in operating machinery or motor vehicle.

### What can help?

#### Eat often to beat tiredness

A good way to keep up your energy throughout the day is to eat regular meals and healthy snacks every three to four hours rather than a large meal less often

#### Perk up with exercise

Regular exercise will make you feel less tired in the long run and you'll have more energy even a single 15 minute walk can give you an energy boost and the benefits increase with more frequent physical activity.

#### Sleep well

It sounds obvious, but two- thirds of us suffer from sleep problems and many people don't get the sleep to stay alert throughout the day.

### What can we do to help?

Discuss with your team what they would consider to be a cause for poor quality of sleep. Some examples social life, family needs, travel time, long time of periods awake ,harsh environmental conditions and mentally or physically demanding work. Consider what steps you can personally take to beat fatigue.

We would welcome any feedback on issues regarding fatigue any suggestions that you may want to share on this topic.

