



Lack of sleep can impact workplace safety

Scientific research shows a connection between lack of sleep and workplace accidents.

A study at Harvard Medical School estimates that insomnia is responsible for 274,000 workplace accidents and errors in the U.S. each year.

Global Corporate Challenge, a provider of employee health and performance services, collected data from nearly 300,000 workers at 1,200 organizations. More than 20 percent of employees self-rated their overall sleep as “extremely poor,” “very poor” or “poor.” Of those, 93 percent were more likely to exhibit fatigue on the job, which is a common symptom of Excessive Daytime Sleepiness, a condition “proven to increase risk of absenteeism, accidents and injury in the workplace.”

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 30 percent of adults in the U.S. suffer from sleep deprivation.

Mark Raymond, an electroencephalographic technologist at Mercy Medical Neurophysiology and Sleep Lab, told the Sioux City Journal that getting only four hours of sleep nightly for a week might be akin to the equivalent to a blood alcohol level of .1 percent — “possibly making it safer to be drunk than sleep impaired once you reach a certain level.”

Sleep experts say an adult needs a minimum of seven hours of sleep to properly function. Researchers at Harvard Medical School have identified a variety of practices and habits that can help anyone maximize the hours they spend sleeping,

even those whose sleep is affected by insomnia, jet lag, or shift work.

Here are some simple tips for making the sleep of your dreams a nightly reality:

- Exercise helps promote restful sleep if it is done several hours before you go to bed.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, and other chemicals that interfere with sleep. Lighten up on evening meals, too.

- A quiet, dark, and cool environment can help promote sound slumber. Lower the volume of outside noise with earplugs or a “white noise” appliance. Use heavy curtains, blackout shades, or an eye mask to block light, a powerful cue that tells the brain that it’s time to wake up. Keep the temperature comfortably cool—be-

tween 60 and 75 degrees —and the room well ventilated. And make sure your bedroom is equipped with a comfortable mattress and pillows. Also, if a pet regularly wakes you during the night, you may want to consider keeping it out of your bedroom.

- Keeping computers, TVs, and work materials out of the bedroom will strengthen the mental association between your bedroom and sleep.

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Going to bed and waking up at the same time sets the body’s “internal clock” to expect sleep at a certain time night after night. Try to stick as closely as possible to your routine on weekends to avoid a Monday morning sleep hangover. Waking up at the same time each day is the very best way to set your clock.

- Establish a soothing pre-sleep routine. Light reading before bed or a hot bath is a good way to prepare for sleep. If you tend to take your problems to bed, try writing them down—and then putting them aside.

- Go to sleep when you’re truly tired. Struggling to fall sleep just leads to frustration. If

you’re not asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed, go to another room, and do something relaxing, like reading or listening to music until you are tired enough to sleep.

- Don’t be a nighttime clock-watcher. Staring at a clock in your bedroom, either when you are trying to fall asleep or when you wake in the middle of the night, can actually increase stress, making it harder to fall asleep. Turn your clock’s face away from you.

- Drink enough fluid at night to keep from waking up thirsty—but not so much and so close to bedtime that you will be awakened by the need for a trip to the bathroom.

- Nap early—or not at all. Many people make naps a regular part of their day. However, for those who find falling asleep or staying asleep through the night problematic, afternoon napping may be one of the culprits. If you must nap, it’s better to keep it short and before 5 p.m.

If your sleep difficulties don’t improve through good sleep hygiene, you may want to consult your physician or a sleep specialist.

JIM BERNARD

for

Clackamas County Chair



Trusted, Effective Leader

- Jim will work tirelessly to build relationships, strengthen our businesses and industries, and help create a strong work force.
- Jim will say YES to smart growth and job creation, because all jobs count!
- Jim will fight to ensure that Clackamas remains one of Oregon’s safest counties.
- Jim will defend our quality of life and the special character of Clackamas County.

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