

Employee Assistance Program
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HEALTHY

EXCHANGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WINTER 2017

For Your Information

BETTER PROBLEM SOLVING FOR COUPLES

If you find that you and your partner are going around and around on the same problem without a solution – rather than opposing each other – make a commitment to each other to be on the same team. When you work together to problem solve and be on the same team to determine an acceptable compromise, you have a real chance of finding a solution that is acceptable to both of you.

GOOD HEALTH: HOW IMPORTANT IS ATTITUDE?

Burn patients who have a positive attitude recover more quickly and completely than patients who do not. The patient's degree of optimism and active involvement in their recovery is a better indicator of how well he/she will recover than is the size or severity of the burn. (From American Medical News)

PARENTING TIP

Encourage family activities. Spending time together as a family helps foster the parent/child relationship and helps children feel more safe and accepted, which helps them develop into strong, confident and independent individuals. Suggestions: Plan a picnic, movie night, family dinner, game night or vacation.



WELLNESS

Why Drinking Alcohol To Induce Sleep Is A Problem

Many people use alcohol to help them fall asleep. But the latest research reports that – while alcohol can help you fall asleep faster – its negative impact on the quality and quantity of your sleep far outweighs its sleep-inducing effects. Plus, regular use of alcohol as a sleep aid may result in a dependency on alcohol.



How alcohol reduces the quality of your sleep

According to researchers at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, drinking alcohol to fall asleep interferes with sleep homeostasis, the body's sleep-regulating mechanism. It reduces rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, the stage of sleep when you dream and an important phase of restorative sleep. Alcohol may seem to be helping you sleep – as it helps induce sleep – but the result is lighter, lower-quality sleep, interrupted by frequent awakenings which lead to a poorer night's rest.

How alcohol affects sleep apnea

Those suffering from sleep apnea should be extremely careful when mixing alcohol and sleep. Sleep apnea is a condition caused by obstructions in the airway that makes it difficult to breathe effectively while sleeping. Alcohol intensifies this problem by causing the airways to narrow even further and making it even harder for the person to get the quality of sleep they need. Research from the University of Wisconsin-Madison shows that men, especially, have longer episodes of sleep-disordered breathing after drinking alcohol.

Use of alcohol and dependency

Using alcohol on a regular basis to change your mood, relax or help you fall asleep is a dangerous choice that can lead to dependence. One of the symptoms of alcohol dependence is the need to drink increasingly more to feel the same result. Health experts recommend that regular use of alcohol as a sleep aid may result in a dependency on alcohol and that alcohol should not be used as a sleep aid.

Why a chronic lack of sleep is bad for you

According to the latest research, the consequences of too little sleep are more than just daytime fatigue, a bad mood or a lack of focus. Regular poor sleep puts you at risk of serious medical conditions, including depression, obesity, heart disease and diabetes – and it can shorten your life expectancy. British researchers who studied how sleep patterns affected the mortality of more than 10,000 British civil servants

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Inducing sleep...

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over two decades found that those who cut their sleep from seven to five hours or fewer a night nearly doubled their risk of death from all causes. In particular, lack of sleep doubled the risk of death from cardiovascular disease.



Better Sleep Habits

If you are having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, the following are tips to help you improve the quality of your sleep:

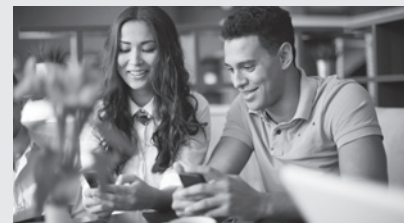
- 1. Exercise regularly** – Exercise dissipates stress and exercised muscles relax more easily, which will help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.
- 2. Avoid stimulants** – Caffeine can keep you going long after you drink it. It is best to cut it out of your day by 2 p.m. Avoid alcohol or nicotine in the evening.
- 3. Set regular hours** – Getting up at the same time and going to bed at the same time every day is an important way to train your body for restful sleep.
- 4. Calm your mind and body** – Give your mind and body time to settle into sleep by unplugging from all electronic devices and removing any stimulating activities near your bedtime routine.
- 5. Create a relaxing sleep environment** Reserve your bedroom for sleeping and sex only. Keep your bedroom at a cool temperature.

If you need help

If you try the suggestions above and find that you still are having trouble falling asleep and staying asleep, talk to your doctor or a sleep medicine physician to determine what factors are keeping you from sleeping. You can also contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. Your EAP is available to you or your dependents to help you with most-any personal, family or work-related issue.

SELF IMPROVEMENT

Three Reasons To Disconnect From Digital Technology



While it may be the norm for many, being connected 24/7 to your computer, laptop, smartphone or iPad comes with a price. Here are three good reasons to take breaks from digital technology.

1. Recharge from job stress – According to a survey conducted by VTech, being constantly accessible for work was the number-one source of technology-related stress. Studies show, however, that in spite of modern work trends, our brains need downtime for recovery and we need our evenings and weekends to disconnect and recuperate from the stresses of work. Although it can be tempting to continue to check email, return text messages and answer work calls after normal work hours, it is important to allocate time for yourself and switch off work stress. Tell your colleagues that you will be unavailable after a certain time, turn off your phone and computer and set aside some work-free time each evening to relax. Your employer will benefit too, as you'll be coming back to work more relaxed and recharged each day.

2. Maximize your productivity – Studies have found that multitasking reduces your productivity by 40 percent. This is because our brains are designed to focus on one thing at a time and bombarding them with unrelated, extraneous information only slows them down. Researchers at Stanford University found that people who are regularly besieged with several streams of electronic information cannot pay attention, recall information, or switch from one job to another as well as those who completed one task at a time. To improve your productivity at work – or for other cognitive tasks – do one thing at a time and give it your full attention. Disconnect from your phone, texting, email, social media, etc. and schedule specific times during the day to attend to these.

3. Improve your mood – Mental health researchers report that being overly tuned in to smartphones and laptops causes over-stimulation, anxiety and stress. A recent study showed that people now check their mobile phones more than 150 times per day. Just like your physical body, your brain needs downtime too. Mental health experts recommend scheduling breaks during the day from all digital technology, “unplugging” during dinner and at least two hours before bedtime.

SAI Employee Assistance Program

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(800) 799-9EAP

◆ **24 Hour Helpline:** Your EAP is always available to help you or your dependents with most-any personal, family or work-related concern.

- ✓ Marriage and family difficulties
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Drug and alcohol abuse
- ✓ Emotional stress
- ✓ Work Issues
- ✓ And more...

Communicate with a counselor:

- ◆ Face to Face Counseling
- ◆ Telephonic Counseling
- ◆ Web Based Counseling