

The Importance of Good Sleep Habits

According to the American Sleep Disorders Association, there are over 85 recognized sleep disorders. At least one third of the American population is affected by one or more of the disorders.

Chronic sleep disturbances and deprivation can have several causes. Many people sacrifice much needed sleep to gain more time for work or recreational activities. Others have a hard time falling asleep or experience restless sleep because of the stresses of everyday life. Yet others lack quality sleep because of such sleep disorders as sleep apnea or insomnia. Additionally, medical and mental health conditions have an adverse effect on sleep patterns.

The consequences of poor sleep range from minor to serious, life threatening problems. They may include:

- Increased stress
- Decreased quality of life
- Irritability and moodiness
- Poor performance at home and work
- Low level of alertness
- Poor memory and cognitive impairment
- Occupational or automobile injuries and fatalities
- Blood pressure and heart conditions
- Weight gain and obesity
- Psychiatric problems

The benefits of good sleep habits are obvious. Improved health, mood and productivity lend to an overall increase in one's quality of life. For sleep disturbances caused by lifestyle, a simple change in behavior can cause an almost immediate improvement in sleep. Consider these additional strategies:

- Exercise daily
- Create a bedtime routine that helps you relax
- Decrease or quit consuming alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, especially after dinner.
- Avoid meals that are high in fat before bed
- Avoid naps later in the day
- Have appropriately sized and comfortable bed and pillows
- Ensure cool room temperature and low or no light during sleep hours
- Make your bed a no work, no stress, no TV zone
- Seek medical assistance for persistent sleep disturbances

Sleep disturbances can have serious consequences. They can be symptoms of mental health or medical problems and should be taken seriously.

To access your Employee Assistance Program, please call BPA at 1-800-726-0003 or visit www.bpahealth.com for more information.



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