

# a healthy balance

## Did you know your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) could help?

### Did you know you could get assistance with improving sleep habits?

Improving your health and well-being through better sleep habits is just one of the ways your assistance and work/life support program can help you. For more information, call or go online any day, any time, for confidential assistance, resources or a referral to help resolve your concerns.

### Searching for sleep?

Do you often wake up wishing you had more time to sleep? How many times do you push the snooze button on your alarm clock? If you aren't waking up feeling refreshed, you may not be getting enough quality sleep.

There are factors that can play into your loss of sleep. The Sleep Foundation calls these factors "sleep stealers." According to the Sleep Foundation, stress is considered, by most sleep experts, to be the number one cause of short-term sleeping difficulties. Common triggers include school or job-related pressures, a family or marriage problem, or a serious illness or death in the family. Other sleep stealers can include sleep loss due to shift work, jet lag, environmental changes (your room is too hot or too cold) or physical factors (arthritis, headaches, backaches).

### How much is enough?

The amount of sleep you need depends on your individual requirements. You will know how much sleep you need by evaluating how you feel during your waking hours. Sleep should leave you feeling refreshed and awake during the day, and able to manage your daily activities. Most adults do best with 7 to 8 hours each night, although some people need more or less than that.

### Tips for getting a good night's sleep

Although much of your sleep is out of your control, since it's regulated by the brain, you do have

control over certain aspects of your sleep. If you identify your personal sleep habits, you can learn how to create a sleep ritual that builds good habits and promotes better quality sleep.

- If you're taking medications, consult with your doctor or pharmacist to identify any side effects that may be affecting your sleep.
- Keep a consistent routine. Set your biological clock for going to sleep and waking at the same time during the day.
- Exercise regularly, but refrain from exercise at least four hours before bedtime.
- Don't sleep during the day. Try not to nap, but if you really must have a nap, limit it to 20-30 minutes.
- Make sure that your bedroom is quiet, comfortable and kept at a cooler temperature.
- Try to avoid caffeine. While it's best to try to eliminate caffeine altogether, it's especially important during late afternoon and evening hours.
- Decline having a "night cap." When alcohol leaves your system, it works as a stimulant – which can keep you awake.
- Many books have been written on meditation and relaxation that you may find helpful. CDs with relaxing sounds and/or music are also available.
- While many people think that watching TV is a way to relax, it may actually keep you awake. Instead, consider listening to the radio or some relaxing music.

Having a restful night's sleep can give you the energy to overcome stress, depression, and the struggles of everyday life.

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