



# Live Well, Work Well

Sleep disorders are very expensive, costing the economy an estimated \$100 billion in lost productivity from increased absences and illnesses.

## SLEEP DISORDERS

Sleep is essential for normal, healthy function. However, about 40 million people in the United States suffer from chronic sleep disorders each year, and another 20 million people suffer occasional sleep problems.

### Types and Causes

There are more than 100 different sleep and wake disorders. Generally classified into four categories, sleep disorders include:

- *Trouble falling and staying asleep*, such as insomnia
- *Disturbed sleep*, such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome
- *Excessive sleep*, such as narcolepsy
- *Trouble sticking to a regular sleep schedule*, usually seen in travelers or nighttime workers

Sleep disorders are very common and can result from a number of causes, including stress, illness, diet or medication. Other causes include genetics, night-shift work, blindness, mental illness, physical illness and aging.

### Diagnosis

As with other neurological disorders, an accurate medical history is an essential component of a sleep disorder diagnosis. People with sleep disorders should keep a daily log of activities and sleep, including both when going to sleep and time actually asleep. Behavior during sleep, such as snoring or frequent waking, should be reported to the doctor. Also it's important to mention any tobacco, alcohol or other drug use to your doctor.

### Treatment

Treatment for sleep disorders depends on the cause. If a cause has not been identified for a particular sleep disorder, improving sleep habits is the best way to overcome the disorder. Follow these tips for a good night's sleep:

- Set a schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same

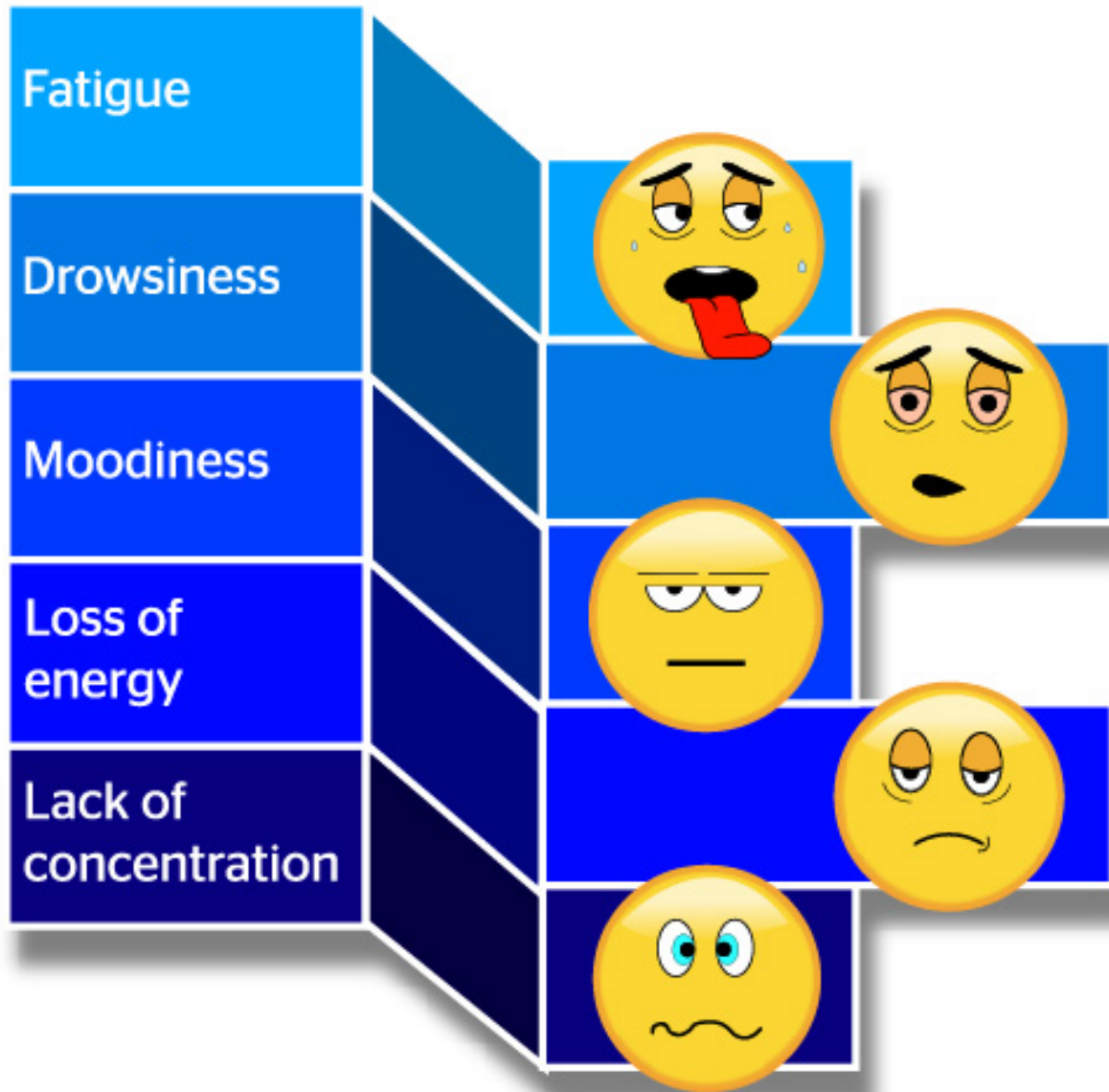
time every day, even on the weekends.

- Exercise daily, but not within a few hours of going to bed.
- Avoid caffeine, cigarettes and alcohol within several hours of bedtime, all of which can cause sleep deprivation or missing an important stage of the sleep cycle.
- Try to enjoy a relaxing bedtime ritual every night before going to sleep, like taking a hot bath or reading a book.
- Try to wake up to the sun by opening curtains or shades and letting in the sunlight. Or, go outside briefly. The sun helps trigger and reset the biological clock, which is the part of the brain that indicates both sleepiness and when it is time to wake up.
- Before going to bed, make sure that the room is not too hot or too cold.

# Trouble **Sleeping?**

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## Insufficient sleep causes:



## Establish and maintain a sleep routine:

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- Avoid caffeine and nicotine three to four hours before going to bed.
- Create a good sleep environment, including a comfortable room temperature, minimal noise and sufficient darkness.
- Go to bed and wake up the same time each day.
- Aim to get seven to eight hours of sleep per night.



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Besides grabbing one of these snacks, getting to sleep may be easier when your body is on a schedule.

## GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP WITH FOOD

If you're like many, you have a difficult time getting the seven or eight hours of sleep that you need to be functional throughout the day. Yet, some of your favorites in the kitchen may be just the ticket to send you snoozing.

Approximately 90 minutes before you want to fall asleep, make yourself a snack of roughly 200 calories from the items listed below. These sleep-inducing foods will help your muscles relax, quiet your mind and produce sleep-inducing hormones (serotonin and melatonin) to get you right off to bed.

- **Bananas.** These power fruits contain serotonin and melatonin, and the muscle relaxant magnesium.
- **Chamomile tea.** This beverage has a mild sedating effect, which will calm your mind and body.
- **Warm milk.** This beverage contains tryptophan, which is sedating and calcium to help your brain use the tryptophan. Warm milk also has a calming effect and is comforting to drink.
- **Honey.** The small amount of glucose in honey communicates with your brain to turn off orexin, a neurotransmitter that contributes to alertness. Place a spoonful in a bowl of oatmeal to head off to bed quickly.
- **Potatoes.** A spud in the evening will clear away the amino acids in your body that can interfere with the powers of tryptophan.
- **Oatmeal.** Oats contain melatonin, which is great for inducing sleep.
- **Almonds.** These nuts contain a healthy dose of tryptophan and magnesium.

- **Flaxseeds.** These seeds are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which will brighten your mood if sadness or anxiety is keeping you from getting to sleep.
- **Whole-wheat bread.** Whole-wheat contains insulin, which assists tryptophan in making its way to your brain. Once there, it is converted to serotonin to send you to sleep in no time.
- **Turkey.** This meat is the best-known food source of tryptophan. If you eat a slice of turkey on whole-wheat bread, you will be off to sleep because tryptophan works best on a fairly empty stomach with a small amount of carbohydrates.

## Get a Better Night's Sleep

Do you struggle to get a good night's sleep? If so, you're likely feeling fatigued throughout your day, which can cause serious problems for your health, your job and your life.

### Symptoms of Fatigue

Fatigued individuals typically experience drowsiness, mood changes, loss of energy and appetite, headaches, and a lack of motivation, concentration and alertness.

### Fatigue in the Workplace

Going to work fatigued, even occasionally, impairs your ability to perform your job at the highest possible level. The above symptoms are obviously not conducive to productivity, and can also create a safety hazard depending on the job.

### Health Concerns

Studies show that fatigue can lead to other medical conditions, such as depression, anxiety, high blood pressure and diabetes. Similarly, many health conditions can cause the poor sleep that produces fatigue.

In addition, while many people suffer simply from trouble sleeping, others have more serious sleep disorders such as sleep apnea or insomnia.

### Sleep Hygiene

There are certain ways you can improve your sleep, referred to as "sleep hygiene."

- Strive for seven to eight hours a night. This may involve changing the schedule you're used to, but it's vital to make sleep a priority.
- Keep a regular schedule—try to go to bed and wake up the same time each day, including weekends.
- Create a good sleep environment, including comfortable room temperature, minimal noise and sufficient darkness.
- Keep track of habits that help you fall asleep, like relaxing music or reading before bed. Repeat those activities each night.

### Healthy Habits

There are some specific habits that will help you not only sleep better, but lead a healthier lifestyle in general:

- Eat nutritiously. Good eating habits can help you sleep better and feel energized all day. Also, avoid big meals right before going to bed.
- Exercise regularly. This also helps your sleep quality and daytime energy level. Just be sure to avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine three to four hours before going to bed.
- Limit alcohol before bed, as it can reduce sleep quality.