The Importance of Sleep

Studies show that sleep loss and poor-quality sleep leads to accidents and injury on the job. Sleep deprivation can also lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.

Why Is Sleep Important?
Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect your mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.

The way you feel while you’re awake depends in part on what happens while you’re sleeping. During sleep, your body is working to support healthy brain function and maintain your physical health. In children and teens, sleep also helps support growth and development.

The damage from sleep deficiency can occur in an instant (such as a car crash), or it can harm you over time. For example, ongoing sleep deficiency can raise your risk for some chronic health problems. It also can affect how well you think, react, work, learn, and get along with others.

Daytime Performance and Safety
Getting enough quality sleep at the right times helps you function well throughout the day. People who are sleep deficient are less productive at work and school. They take longer to finish tasks, have a slower reaction time, and make more mistakes.

After several nights of losing sleep—even a loss of just 1–2 hours per night—your ability to function suffers as if you haven’t slept at all for a day or two.

Lack of sleep also may lead to microsleep. Microsleep refers to brief moments of sleep that occur when you’re normally awake.

You can’t control microsleep, and you might not be aware of it. For example, have you ever driven somewhere and then not remembered part of the trip? If so, you may have experienced microsleep.

Even if you’re not driving, microsleep can affect how you function. If you’re listening to a lecture, for example, you might miss some of the information or feel like you don’t understand the point. In reality, though, you may have slept through part of the lecture and not been aware of it.

Some people aren’t aware of the risks of sleep deficiency. In fact, they may not even realize that they’re sleep deficient. Even with limited or poor-quality sleep, they may still think that they can function well.

For example, drowsy drivers may feel capable of driving. Yet, studies show that sleep deficiency harms your driving ability as much as, or more than, being drunk. It’s estimated that driver sleepiness is a factor in about 100,000 car accidents each year, resulting in about 1,500 deaths.

Drivers aren’t the only ones affected by sleep deficiency. It can affect people in all lines of work, including healthcare workers, pilots, students, lawyers, mechanics, and assembly line workers.

How Much Sleep Is Enough?
The amount of sleep you need each day will change over the course of your life. Although sleep needs vary from person to person, the chart below shows general recommendations for different age groups.

If you routinely lose sleep or choose to sleep less than needed, the sleep loss adds up. The total sleep lost is called your sleep debt. For example, if you lose 2 hours of sleep each night, you’ll have a sleep debt of 14 hours after a week.

Some people nap as a way to deal with sleepiness. Naps may provide a short-term boost in alertness and performance. However, napping doesn’t provide all of the other benefits of night-time sleep. Thus, you can’t really make up for lost sleep.

Some people sleep more on their days off than on work days. They also may go to

Challenge Yourself...
The May challenge is to get the recommended 7-8 hours of consistent sleep each night for the week of May 25-31.
After reading through the health information, please answer the questions below. Submit your completed questions to Jen Pobst at the Central Office via mail, fax or email and your form will be entered into a drawing for prizes!
Fax: 573.334.3567 Email: jpobst@midamcorp.com

Name (please print): ____________________________________________ Location: __________

1. _______ refers to brief moments of sleep that occur when you’re normally awake.

2. People can learn to get by on little sleep with no negative side effects.
   TRUE      FALSE

3. Name 2 things that sleep deficiency can cause. ____________________________.

4. Total sleep lost is called your sleep _________________.

5. Did you complete the sleep challenge for May 24-31?     YES      NO

Please turn in completed by June 8, 2015

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical professional.