



Fatigue Risk Management

Performance

WHAT IS FATIGUE?

Fatigue is a state of mental or physical exhaustion which reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively.

HOW DOES LACK OF SLEEP AFFECT...

HOW I FUNCTION?

We know that we don't function at our best when we aren't getting adequate sleep, but how exactly does sleep loss affect us? Fatigue can manifest with physical, mental, and emotional symptoms.

Sleep loss hinders our ability to focus our attention on tasks, solve simple and complex problems, recall important information, and comprehend and react to our environment.

Others can notice the impacts of sleep loss as well, as it negatively affects our ability to communicate effectively with others; our capacity for empathy; we can become more irritable; we have difficulty regulating our emotions. Sleep deprivation can lead to nodding off and microsleeps, putting ourselves at risk of falling asleep on the job or on the road.

MY WORK?

We know that sleep loss can affect our attention, reaction time, and mood, all of which are important factors in our work. When we feel fatigued, we aren't as productive, we are more prone to making mistakes, and our overall ability to perform our work decreases. Increased fatigue can also lead to an increased risk for making errors while working and can put you or your patients at risk for injury.

Prolonged sleep loss can lead to a drop in positive working relationships and morale within teams and can lead to a decrease in overall job satisfaction.

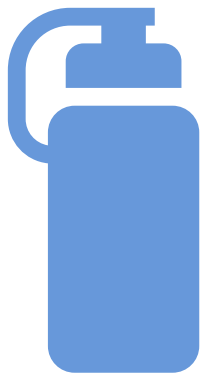
When facing a challenge, no one says stay awake on it, you sleep on it

Sleep plays a critical role in our decision making, alertness, creating memories, and offloading unnecessary information. An important component to tackling any challenge is to make sure you're well rested!

WHAT CAN I DO TO COMBAT FATIGUE-RELATED CHANGES IN PERFORMANCE?

Advise colleagues (including allied health care and nursing) when you are experiencing fatigue that may impair practice so that they can increase vigilance. Colleagues are better able to catch near misses when they know their colleagues are experiencing a fatigue-related impairment.

This can also be achieved with team huddles if one team member notices that another member of the team is fatigued. Scheduled and unscheduled huddles allow all team members to participate and support prioritizing patient load and addressing current needs. Standard briefings such as Surgical Safety Checklists and standard communication approaches such as SBAR (Situation Background Assessment and Recommendation) can also increase the likelihood that key steps or information are not missed when members are fatigued.



GET ADEQUATE REST WHEN YOU CAN

When you aren't working, it's important to keep a sleep routine. Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. When you're on call, you can try to reduce your sleep debt by taking naps before or during your call shift. Create a cool, dark, and quiet environment by using eye masks or curtains, earplugs and the 'do not disturb' signs when taking a nap at work. A 20-minute nap followed by 10-minutes of walking or activity to disperse sleep inertia can provide a quick pick me up in alertness during your shift. You can also utilize the 'caff-nap' method: drink 1-2 coffees, set your alarm for 20 minutes and have a nap, followed by 10 minutes of light activity such as walking to fight off sleep inertia. The caffeine will help with alertness, focus, and memory retention after your nap. If you have a bit more time and can have a 90-minute nap (equivalent to one full sleep cycle), you could see up to a 30% improvement in your performance while at work!

Keep healthy habits: It's important to make sure you eat regularly and stay hydrated while working.

Fatigue coupled with low blood sugar and/or dehydration can lead to an even greater decrease in your ability to perform tasks at work. Regular exercise will keep you physically and mentally fit.

 <https://pgme.mcmaster.ca/>

 pgaffair@mcmaster.ca