

# Sleep Awareness Week

March 5-11

Having trouble sleeping?  
Call your Employee Assistance  
Program to help reduce the  
stress in your life - so you  
can rest easier!

**800-451-1834**

Sleep is essential to physical and mental health. Chronic lack of sleep negatively affects focus, concentration, memory and mood, and may even increase one's risk of developing obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Adults need at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep to be well rested, yet in recent surveys one-third reported severe daytime sleepiness that interfered with work or social life. As many as 70 million Americans may suffer from chronic sleep loss or sleep disorders, and 43% of individuals between the ages of 13 and 64 report that they rarely or never get a good night's sleep on weeknights.

Your Employee Assistance Program joins the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) in reminding you that March 5-11 is **National Sleep Awareness Week**. If you frequently have difficulty falling or staying asleep, or are tired during the day, try the following healthy sleep tips:

- **Set and stick to a sleep schedule.** Go to bed and wake up at the same times each day.
- **Expose yourself to bright light in the morning and avoid it at night.** Exposure to bright morning light energizes us and prepares us for a productive day. Alternatively, dim your lights when it's close to bedtime.
- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise in the morning can help you get the light exposure you need to set your biological clock. Avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime if you are having problems sleeping.
- **Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.** Allow enough time to wind down and relax before going to bed.
- **Avoid active technology use in the hour before sleep.**
- **Create a cool, comfortable sleeping environment that is free of distractions.** If you're finding that entertainment or work-related communications are creating anxiety, remove these distractions from your bedroom.
- **Treat your bed as your sanctuary from the stresses of the day.** If you find yourself still lying awake after 20 minutes or so, get up and do something relaxing in dim light until you are sleepy.
- **Keep a "worry book" next to your bed.** If you wake up because of worries, write them down with an action plan, and forget about them until morning.
- **Avoid caffeinated beverages, chocolate and tobacco at night.**
- **Avoid large meals and beverages right before bedtime.**
- **No nightcaps.** Drinking alcohol before bed can rob you of deep sleep and can cause you to wake up too early.
- **Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep.** If you have trouble sleeping, ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medications might be contributing to your sleep problem.
- **No late-afternoon or evening naps, unless you work nights.** If you must nap, keep it under 45 minutes and before 3:00 pm.