

☞ Your Guide to Healthy Sleep

Turn to Page 2 for tips to help you get a good night's sleep.

☞ Managing Holiday Stress

Make this holiday season a happy and peaceful one by learning healthy ways to manage stress.

Welcome!

This quarter's theme is on managing holiday stress. We welcome your feedback at ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com.

DidUKnow?

- ◆ Chronic sleepiness may be associated with difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, loss of energy, fatigue, lethargy, and emotional instability.
- ◆ There are more than 70 sleep disorders that have been described, the most common of which are insomnia, sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, and narcolepsy.
- ◆ Sleep walking, sleep talking, and sleep terrors are more common in children than adults. Children generally have no memory of such events, usually do not require treatment, and usually outgrow the disorder.
- ◆ 1.9 billion Christmas cards are sent to friends and loved ones every year, making Christmas the largest card-sending occasion in the United States. (Source: Hallmark research)
- ◆ 20 billion letters, packages and cards are delivered by the U.S. Postal Service between Thanksgiving and Christmas (Source: U.S. Postal Service.)
- ◆ LifeSolutions WorkLife Web portal has over 100,000 articles and resources, including information on how stress affects the body.

Sources:

- http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/005870.html
- <http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements/nih3/sleep/guide/info-sleep.htm>

To use our WorkLife Resource Center, e-mail or call us for your company code: ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com

1.800.647.3327

www.lifesolutionsforyou.com

LifeSolutions is a confidential workplace benefit available at no cost to you and members of your household.

Managing Holiday Stress

Have you ever thought ... "Being calm and peaceful ... how can I achieve that when I can barely find a moment of calm or peace in my day"? The holidays are here, bringing more things to do, people to see, and places to go. These things might be fun, but they also can be stressful. Holidays can be particularly challenging for those who are missing being with a loved one or with family. To make this holiday season a happy and peaceful one, look for healthy ways to manage stress.

Get Real: Set Reasonable Expectations

The media often portrays the holiday season as trouble-free and festive. The reality of the holidays, much like life, is that real people and families are not perfect. If you can change your expectations, you may have a more enjoyable experience.

Tips for setting reasonable expectations

- ◆ *Do your best to stick to your regular routine.* Try to keep bedtimes and mealtimes the same even when you're away from home.
- ◆ *Talk with your family about schedules.* Do the things that you all will enjoy the most, and then say "no" to extra activities.
- ◆ *Talk with your family about finances.* Even young children can learn how to budget for gifts. Urge them to get creative and make presents for family members instead of buying them.
- ◆ *If you are spending the holiday alone,* celebrate holiday traditions that don't need to be shared with family, such as decorating and making traditional foods.

Take Time To Relax

It is important to take time to relax this holiday season. Here are a few ways to cope with holiday stress:

- ◆ Plan quiet time or at least downtime from activities.
- ◆ Take a few moments to read a book.
- ◆ Take a bubble bath.
- ◆ Sit down and listen to your favorite songs.
- ◆ Play a board game with your family.
- ◆ Go for a walk to see holiday displays in your neighborhood.
- ◆ Make sure to get 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

Just Do Your Best

As you enjoy the holiday season, do your best to limit stress. Don't expect everything to go as planned. Your child may get sick on the holiday, the oven might break as you are cooking a special dinner, or a storm may prevent relatives from visiting.

Don't let unexpected events ruin the holidays for you. Be adaptable and flexible. You can help yourself and your family relax and enjoy the holidays for what they truly are: a time of joy, celebration, and peace with friends and family.

Let Us Help!

If you are concerned about being able to cope during the holiday season, stressful family situations, or just want someone to support you during this time, LifeSolutions can help. Coaching/Counseling sessions can include you and/or any of your household members. Simply call 1.800.647.3327 to get started.

Source: <http://family.samhsa.gov/be/holidaystress.aspx>

Your Guide to Healthy Sleep

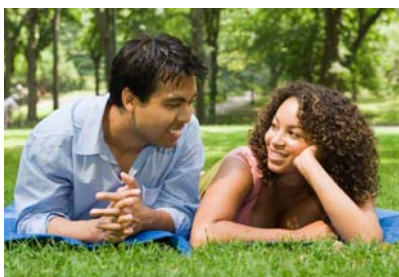
Think of everything you do during your day and try to guess which activity is so important you should devote one-third of your time to doing it. If you guessed **sleeping**, you are right.

Many people view sleep as merely a “down time” when the brain shuts off and the body rests. In a rush to meet work, school, family, or household responsibilities, people cut back on their sleep, thinking it won’t be a problem. But research reveals that a number of vital tasks carried out during sleep help to maintain good health and enable people to function at their best.

While you sleep, your brain is hard at work forming the pathways necessary for learning and creating memories and new insights. Without enough sleep, you can’t focus and pay attention or respond quickly. A lack of sleep may even cause mood problems. In addition, growing evidence shows that a chronic lack of sleep increases the risk for developing obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and infections.

Despite the mounting support for the notion that adequate sleep, like adequate nutrition and physical activity, is vital to our well-being, people are sleeping *less*. The following are tips for helping you get a good night’s sleep.

- ◆ **Stick to a sleep schedule.** Go to bed and wake up the same time each day.
- ◆ **Avoid caffeine and nicotine.** Coffee, colas, certain teas, and chocolate contain the stimulant caffeine, and its effects can take as long as 8 hours to wear off fully. Nicotine is also a stimulant, often causing smokers to sleep only very lightly.
- ◆ **Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed.** You may think having an alcoholic “nightcap” will help you sleep, but alcohol robs you of deep sleep and REM sleep, keeping you in the lighter stages of sleep.
- ◆ **Avoid large meals and beverages late at night.** A light snack is okay, but a large meal can cause indigestion that interferes with sleep. Drinking too many fluids at night can cause frequent awakenings to urinate.
- ◆ **Don’t take naps after 3 p.m.** Naps can help make up for lost sleep, but late afternoon naps can make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- ◆ **Relax before bed.** Don’t over schedule your day so that no time is left for unwinding. A relaxing activity, such as reading or listening to music, should be part of your bedtime ritual.
- ◆ **Take a hot bath before bed.** The drop in body temperature after getting out of the bath may help you feel sleepy, and the bath can help you relax and slow down so you’re more ready to sleep.
- ◆ **Have a good sleeping environment.** Get rid of anything that might distract you from sleep, such as noises, bright lights, an uncomfortable bed, or warm temperatures.



Want to learn more about sleep and the importance it has on physical and emotional well-being? Visit *LifeSolutions* online at www.lifesolutionsforyou.com or call 1.800.647.3327 to speak with one of our EAP Counselors.

Common Sleep Myths

Myth: Sleep is a time when your body and brain shut down for rest and relaxation.

No evidence shows that any major organ (including the brain) or regulatory system in the body shuts down during sleep. Some physiological processes actually become more active during sleep.

Myth: Your body adjusts quickly to different sleep schedules.

It can take more than a week to adjust to a dramatically altered sleep/wake cycle, such as you encounter when traveling across several time zones or switching from working the day shift to the night shift.

Myth: People need less sleep as they get older.

Older people don’t need less sleep, but they often *get* less sleep or find their sleep less refreshing. That’s because as people age, they spend less time in deep, restful stages of sleep and are more easily awakened.

Myth: You can make up for lost sleep during the week by sleeping more on the weekends.

Although this sleeping pattern will help relieve part of a sleep debt, it will not completely make up for lack of sleep or impaired performance during the week.

Myth: Naps are a waste of time.

Although naps don’t substitute for a good night’s sleep, they can be restorative and help counter some of the impaired performance that results from not getting enough sleep at night.

Myth: Children who don’t get enough sleep at night will show signs of sleepiness during the day.

Children who don’t get enough sleep at night typically become more active than normal during the day. They also show difficulty paying attention and behaving properly. Consequently, they may be misdiagnosed as having attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Myth: The main cause of insomnia is worry.

Although worry or stress can cause a short bout of insomnia, a persistent inability to fall asleep or stay asleep at night can be caused by a number of other factors like depression, anxiety disorders, asthma, or arthritis.

Source: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/sleep/healthy_sleep.pdf