



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

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Behavioral Health Systems EAP Newsletter



What Are the Signs of Excessive Sleepiness?

According to psychologist and sleep expert David F. Dinges, Ph.D., of the Division of Sleep and Chronobiology and Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, some of the first symptoms a person experiences from lack of sleep are:

- irritability
- moodiness
- disinhibition

If a sleep-deprived person doesn't sleep after the initial signs, said Dinges, the person may then start to experience

- apathy
- slowed speech
- flattened emotional responses
- impaired memory
- inability to multitask.

According to leading sleep researchers, there are techniques to combat common sleep problems:

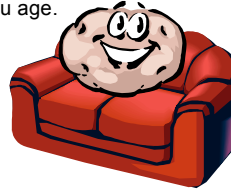
- Keep a regular sleep/wake schedule
- Don't drink or eat caffeine four to six hours before bed and minimize daytime use
- Don't smoke, especially near bedtime or if you awake in the night
- Avoid alcohol and heavy meals before sleep
- Get regular exercise
- Minimize noise, light and excessive hot and cold temperatures where you sleep
- Develop a regular bed time and go to bed at the same time each night
- Try and wake up without an alarm clock

- Attempt to go to bed earlier every night for a certain period; this will ensure that you're getting enough sleep

(Dinges, *Sleep, Sleepiness and Performance*, 1991)

Don't Be A Couch Potato!

In addition to its other health benefits, regular walking also helps improve memory and learning as you age.



STRESS TIP STRESS TIP

Learning to deal with stress effectively is a worthwhile effort, even if you already consider yourself capable of handling anything life sends your way. Many of the most common long-term stressors—family illness, recovery after injury, career pressures—often arise without warning and simultaneously. Stress management is particularly valuable if your family has a history of hypertension and other forms of heart disease.

Make time for yourself at least two or three times a week.

Even ten minutes a day of "personal time" can help refresh your mental outlook and slow down your body's stress response systems. Turn off the phone, spend time alone in your room, exercise, or meditate to your favorite music.

Welcome to



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

Last month's e-newsletter introduced the BHS receptionists that take your calls each day. All calls are answered by one of our receptionists and then forwarded directly to the Care Coordinator responsible for managing the care of the company providing the coverage.

All BHS Care Coordinators are Master's prepared mental health professionals with a minimum of five years experience. Each company BHS provides coverage for has a designated Care Coordinator. BHS Care Coordinators can answer any questions you have about your benefits and the services that are available to you. Remember, there is no cost to you for utilizing EAP benefits. Contact your BHS Care Coordinator with any questions you may have. Not sure who your Care Coordinator is? Our friendly receptionists can help!

EAP benefits may be accessed for services such as:

- Marital and family counseling
- Stress
- Grief
- Financial
- Legal
- Divorce

U.S. Surgeon General Joins Forces with National Health Coalition to Promote Principles Behind Healthy Weight Loss

www.essentialnutrition.org

At a time when an estimated 65 percent of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese, a coalition of consumer, nutrition and public health groups has joined forces with the U.S. Surgeon General to drive home this important message: *how* you lose weight matters.

Because many overweight Americans have fallen prey to the come-ons of diet books and infomercials that promise a "revolutionary approach" to successful weight loss, the Partnership for Essential Nutrition has joined forces with Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., U.S. Surgeon General, to promote the basic principles associated with healthy and lasting weight loss.

The Partnership for Essential Nutrition, which last year issued health warnings about following extreme low-carb diets, hopes to remind the public about the health risks associated with fad diets

that greatly restrict the intake of specific foods and nutrients.

Based on an extensive body of scientific evidence, extreme diets can increase the risk for a number of life-threatening medical conditions and produce physical discomfort, such as:

- severe constipation
- gastrointestinal problems
- nausea
- repeated headaches
- difficulty concentrating
- loss of energy

Based on information developed by government agencies and leading public health organizations, the recommendations include:

Stay away from diets that sound too good to be true

Any diet plan or product that claims you can lose weight without lowering the calories you take in and/or increasing your physical activity is selling fantasy and false hope.

Set realistic expectations at the start

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), successful weight loss is typically losing about 10 percent of your body weight in six months.

Choose a comprehensive weight loss program that is sustainable

The method must go beyond losing the excess weight and address ways to keep it off.

Remember, it's the calories that count

That's why nutrition experts recommend choosing what are known as "lower-energy density foods" – meaning foods that are higher in water content and not very concentrated in calories.

• Watch your portion size

If you practice portion control, it is possible to eat almost any type of food and still stay within a healthy range of calories for the day.

Be more physically active

For weight control, the new dietary guidelines recommend 60 minutes of activity on most days during the week, which can include walking, dancing, housework and golfing.

Create a Supportive Atmosphere

Don't overlook the benefits of losing weight with other people. Research has shown that individuals recruiting friends or family members to help them had better results losing weight and keeping it off than without a buddy system.

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