



# the key

*Unlocking  
Solutions  
To Everyday  
Problems*



Fall 2009

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Sleep -Do You Need to Seek Help?  
10 Ways to Sleep Better

## EAP COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Healthy sleeping habits are the "Key" to both physical and emotional well-being. As we begin to enter the darkest time of year, our body clocks have a difficult time with the limited sunlight. Be mindful of these changes and get out and get as much sunlight as you can but also remember to get a good nights sleep. Our newsletter focuses on ways to "sleep better".



Robert Lyman, MEd, LICSW  
EAP Coordinator,  
Substance Abuse Professional

EAP Newsletter Producer  
Karen Langlois



St. Luke's Hillside Center  
220 N. 6th Avenue East  
Duluth, MN 55805  
Phone: 218-249-7077  
Toll Free: 888-355-8495



It's a basic necessity of life, as important to our well-being as air, food and water. When we sleep well, we wake up feeling refreshed, alert and ready to face daily challenges. When we don't, every part of our lives can suffer. Our jobs, relationships, productivity, health and safety (and that of those around us) are all put at risk.

## When Do You Need to Seek Help?

If your sleep problems persist for longer than a week and are bothersome, or if sleepiness interferes with the way you feel or function during the day, a doctor's help may be needed. To get the most out of your doctor's visit, you'll find that it is often helpful to keep a diary of your sleep habits for about ten days to identify just how much sleep you're getting over a period of time and what you may be doing to interfere with it. It can help you document your problem so that your physician can best understand.

If the problem is the time it takes to fall asleep, staying asleep or waking up unrefreshed, your doctor may recommend lifestyle changes or behavioral approaches to treating the problem. However, lifestyle changes alone may not be enough. Treating insomnia with medication is the most common treatment for these sleep problems. In most cases, medication is only used until the immediate stressor is under control or lifestyle changes have had a chance to work.

While many individuals will try an over-the-counter medicine to help them sleep, these should be taken with caution. Your physician or pharmacist can help inform you about the different types of medications available and which would be most effective for you. Alcohol should not be used as a sleep aid.

For sleep apnea or other sleep disorder, your doctor may want to do a sleep study that will provide more information about your sleep pattern and whether you are breathing regularly while you sleep.

The bottom line is this: Adequate sleep is as essential to health and peak performance as exercise and good nutrition. If you aren't getting enough, talk to your physician. You deserve it.



Confidential, professional help with your personal matters.  
Provided at no charge to you by your employer.

[www.slhduluth.com/hospital/other-services/eap](http://www.slhduluth.com/hospital/other-services/eap)



**Did you know...?**

- A 2002 national sleep poll found that 58% of adults said they have trouble sleeping at least a few nights a week.
- The same poll found that the majority of adults believe that their work quality suffers when they don't get enough sleep.
- Most adults need 7 to 8 hours of sleep to function optimally, although this may vary from person to person.
- Insomnia often involves more than just trouble falling asleep; it may also mean trouble staying asleep and waking too early.
- Causes of insomnia include stressful situations, such as work or a death in the family; medical conditions, such as arthritis pain and depression; and medications; such as some antidepressants and blood pressure medicines.
- People with chronic insomnia have a greater chance of developing depression than people who sleep well.
- Good sleep hygiene is important for preventing insomnia. Good sleep hygiene includes maintaining a regular sleep schedule, using the bed only for sleep and sex, and avoiding caffeine 6 hours before bedtime—your doctor can tell you more.
- Taken according to your doctor's instructions, prescription sleep aides can safely and effectively help you sleep better
- Your doctor can help you sleep better.

**10 WAYS TO SLEEP BETTER**

from the National Sleep Foundation

- 1. Go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day.**  
Keeping a regular sleep schedule, even on weekends, helps to develop a sleep-wake rhythm that encourages better sleep.
- 2. Create a comfortable sleep environment.**  
You can try to control a number of the elements in your bedroom that will promote good sleep, such as:  
**Temperature:**  
For most people, cool is better than hot.  
**Light:**  
Keep your bedroom as dark as possible. You might even consider wearing an eye mask.  
**Noise:**  
Less noise means more sleep. You can reduce noise levels with rugs and drapes, earplugs, background "white" noise (such as a fan), or soothing music.  
**Comfort:**  
A good mattress can improve the quality of sleep.  
**Function:**  
Try not to use your bedroom for work activities, such as balancing the checkbook or studying. Make your bedroom a stress-free zone.

- 3. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.**  
Alcohol may help you get to sleep, but it will make your sleep restless and uneasy. Caffeine—contained in tea, cola, and chocolate, as well as in coffee—is a stimulant and can cause problems for people trying to fall asleep.
- 4. Watch your diet.**  
A heavy meal or spicy foods before bedtime can lead to nighttime discomfort, and fluids can require disruptive trips to the bathroom. A light snack, however, can prevent hunger pangs and help you sleep better.
- 5. Get out of bed if you're not sleeping.**  
If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 30 minutes, get up. Get back into bed only when you feel sleepy.
- 6. Exercise regularly.**  
Regular exercise has been shown to improve sleep. Exercising in the morning or afternoon—at least 3 hours before bedtime, so you won't be too "revved up"—will help you get a deeper, more restful sleep.
- 7. Cut back on or stop tobacco use.**  
Nicotine, like caffeine, is a stimulant and can cause problems for people trying to fall asleep.
- 8. Avoid watching the clock.**  
Set the alarm and place the clock out of sight. Constant checking can even *cause* insomnia.
- 9. Create a relaxing bedtime routine.**  
Read a good book, listen to music, practice relaxation techniques, or take a warm bath.
- 10. Talk to your doctor or health-care provider.**  
Discuss your sleep problems with your doctor or health-care provider and find out if medication can help.

**SLEEP NEEDS OVER THE LIFE CYCLE**

Infants/Babies*	0-2 months: 10.5-18.5 hours
	2-12 months: 14-15 hours
Toddlers/Children*	12-18 months: 13-15 hours
	18 months-3 years: 12-14 hours
	3-5 years: 11-13 hours 5-12 years: 9-11 hours
Adolescents	8.5-9.5 hours
Adults/Older Persons	On Average: 7-9 hours

\* Total time includes naps