



WORKERS HEALTH CENTRE

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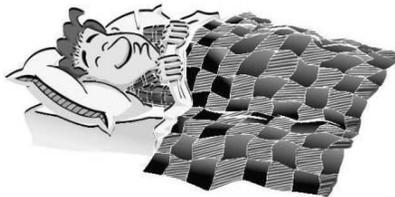
Health And Safety

Fact Sheet

HEALTH EFFECTS OF FATIGUE

Short term effects on an individual include impaired work performance, such as reduced ability to:

- Concentrate and avoid distraction
- Think laterally and analytically
- Make decisions
- Remember and recall events and their sequences.
- Maintain vigilance
- Control emotions
- Appreciate complex situations
- Recognise risks
- Coordinate hand-eye movements
- Communicate effectively



Fatigue also increases:

- Error rates
- Slow Reaction time
- The likelihood of accidents and injuries

Fatigue compared with blood alcohol content

Being awake for 17 hours impairs performance to the same level as having **0.05 blood alcohol content**.

Being awake for 20 hours impairs performance to the same level as having **0.1 blood alcohol content**.

Long term effects on health which are associated with shift work and chronic sleep loss may include:

- Heart disease.
- Anxiety.
- Diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Depression.
- Gastrointestinal disorders.



The factors that contribute to fatigue also disrupt an individual's circadian rhythms. Disruptions in circadian rhythms can also have a significant impact on the effectiveness of certain medications used for asthma and diabetes. Quality of sleep is reduced as people get older. They are therefore, less able to cope with night shift and are at a greater risk of fatigue. Lack of sleep can worsen depression and also affects people with epilepsy, increasing their risk of having a fit. **Although fatigue can accumulate over a long period of time, fatigue due to sleep loss is usually reversible after several nights of good quality sleep.**

For further information and advice contact the Workers Health Centre



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