



# Did you know?...continued

## Can I be impaired by fatigue?

**Yes!** Like alcohol, fatigue impairment slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment ... it therefore affects your cognitive skills. Cognitive skills are the core skills your brain uses to think, read, learn, remember, reason, and pay attention. Working together, they take incoming information and move it into the bank of knowledge you use every day at work and in life. Please see the causes and the signs and effects sections for more information.

## What are the causes of fatigue (including in the workplace)?

There are many, many causes of fatigue. Work-related factors may include:

- ◆ long work hours,
- ◆ long hours of physical or mental activity,
- ◆ insufficient break time between shifts,
- ◆ changes to jobs or shift rotations,
- ◆ inadequate rest,
- ◆ excessive stress,
- ◆ having multiple jobs,

or a combination of these factors.

## What are the signs and effects of fatigue in the workplace:

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|---|--|
| ◆ reduced decision-making ability,  | ◆ increased incident rates   |
| ◆ reduced ability to do complex planning,   | ◆ increased medical costs,   |
| ◆ reduced communication skills,   | ◆ weariness,   |
| ◆ reduced productivity or performance,  | ◆ tiredness,   |
| ◆ reduced attention and vigilance,  | ◆ sleepiness, including falling asleep against your will ("micro" sleeps), |
| ◆ reduced ability to handle stress on the job,  | ◆ irritability,  |
| ◆ reduced reaction time - both in speed and thought,  | ◆ reduced alertness, concentration and memory,                             |
| ◆ loss of memory or the ability to recall details,  | ◆ lack of motivation,  |
| ◆ failure to respond to changes in surroundings or information provided,                      | ◆ depression,  |
| ◆ unable to stay awake (e.g., falling asleep while operating machinery or driving a vehicle), | ◆ giddiness,   |
| ◆ increased tendency for risk-taking,   | ◆ headaches,   |
| ◆ increased forgetfulness,  | ◆ loss of appetite,  |
| ◆ increased errors in judgement,  | ◆ digestive problems,  |
| ◆ increased sick time, absenteeism, rate of turnover,   | ◆ increased susceptibility to illness.                                     |

# Did you know?...continued

## How much sleep do I need?

It varies, but on average studies say we need at least 7 to 9 hours every day. Studies have reported that most night, workers get about 5 to 7 hours less sleep per week than the day shift. (You can accumulate a sleep "debt", but not a surplus.)

If sleep deprivation continues long enough, you could start having hallucinations—seeing or hearing things that aren't there.

Other psychological risks include: impulsive behavior, depression, paranoia and suicidal thoughts

It can also affect: immune system, digestive, respiratory (sleep apnea), cardiovascular and endocrine systems and interrupt hormone growth.

## Why it is difficult to prove fatigue in the workplace?

Employers and supervisors should be concerned about the impact of fatigue in the workplace as it can be considered a form of impairment, making fatigue a workplace hazard. However, fatigue levels are not easily measured or quantified; therefore, it is difficult to isolate the effect of fatigue on accident and injury rates.

Awareness and observation of changes in behaviour is one method to identify fatigue.

**uh-oh!**

Some research studies have shown that when workers have slept for less than 5 hours before work or when workers have been awake for more than 16 hours, their chance of making mistakes at work due to fatigue are significantly increased.

## What should I do if I believe I am impaired by fatigue?

If you think you are impaired by fatigue you shouldn't be working nor driving home after a flight. Your health and safety are the priorities! We highly suggest you fill out a Safety report on Coruson and provide as much details as possible such as the physical and psychological symptoms you are experiencing and details about what caused that state of fatigue (working hours, duty time, deadheads, time of arrival in your hotel room etc.).

Research has shown that the number of hours awake can be similar to blood alcohol levels. One study reports the following:

- ◆ 17 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05
- ◆ 21 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.08 (legal limit in Canada)
- ◆ 24 to 25 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.10