

Topic: Fatigue at Work

Fatigue can be defined as a state of feeling very tired, exhausted or sleepy. The symptoms and causes can be many. One thing for certain is that fatigue increases the risk of a workplace incident.

Symptoms of Fatigue

- Irritability
- Sleepiness
- Giddiness
- Depression

The causes of Fatigue can be attributed to three major categories.

Lifestyle:

- Lack of sleep
- Alcohol use or abuse
- Drug abuse (recreational)
- Caffeine
- Unhealthy eating
- Lack of Exercise
- Extended Shifts
- Shiftwork

Psychological Conditions

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Grief
- Stress

Medical Conditions

- Thyroid Imbalance
- Anemia
- Heart Disease
- Obesity
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Chronic Liver or Kidney Disease
- Chronic Pain
- Diabetes
- Sleep Apnea
- Narcolepsy
- Insomnia
- Side Effects of Prescription Medications
- Lung Conditions

One study has shown that fatigue can have similar effects to drinking alcohol:

17 hours awake is equivalent to blood alcohol content of .05

21 hours awake is equivalent to blood alcohol content of .08

24-25 hours awake is equivalent to blood alcohol content of .1

Effects of Fatigue

- Reduced reaction time in speed and thought
- Loss of memory and ability to recall details
- Reduced decision-making ability
- Risk taking that's out of character for them
- Reduced productivity
- Unable to stay awake
- Inability to focus

The Medical and Psychological factors need to be diagnosed and treated by a Medical Professional. We can have a significant impact on reducing fatigue by making some lifestyle changes. One of the more obvious ways are making healthy choices of what is put into our body. Also making fitness a priority