



# Sleep Program Employer Guide

Presented by HealthSure

# Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adults over the age of 18 should get seven hours or more of sleep per night. Despite this expert recommendation, nearly one-third of American adults fail to get as much sleep as they should. Although this might not seem problematic, consistently failing to get enough sleep can put employees at risk of significant health problems. In fact, not getting enough sleep is linked to a variety of chronic conditions like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, depression and obesity—all of which are leading health care cost drivers. Moreover, failing to regularly get enough sleep can lead to chronic fatigue, which can increase the risk of productivity issues at work and distracted driving crashes.

As you can see, employee fatigue is a serious concern, and it's one that could be costing your business. According to the National Safety Council (NSC), fatigue costs employers nationwide \$136 billion annually. Specifically, fatigue in the workplace can contribute to the following:

- **Decreased productivity**—The NSC found that those who sleep less than six hours each night cost employers about six workdays a year in productivity. This productivity includes employee absenteeism and presenteeism.
- **Increased risk of occupational accidents or injuries**—According to OSHA, employee fatigue increases the risk of a workplace accident or injury. For employees who work night or evening shifts, or extended hours, the risk of fatigue-related accidents and injuries is 18% to 30% greater.
- **Increased health care costs**—Fatigue, as previously mentioned, is linked to an increased risk of developing chronic conditions. Treating these accounts for 86% of the nation's overall health care costs.

Any problem that causes decreased productivity and increased absenteeism is one that you want to address in your workforce. Despite these serious consequences of fatigue, there is good news. There are a wide variety of low-cost strategies that you can implement at your organization to promote the importance of sleep.

This guide serves as an introduction to the six-week employee sleep program. The mini-wellness program promotes employee sleep education and provides a space where employees can track their sleep. This employer guide includes strategies that businesses can use to promote the use of the program and to create a culture that stresses the importance of sleep. Use of this program should be voluntary, and the information provided in the guide should be used for informational purposes only. For medical advice, please consult a medical professional.

# How the 6-week Employee Sleep Program Can Help Your Employees

The voluntary six-week employee sleep program focuses on sleep tracking and evaluation. Many times, lack of sleep can be improved by making small adjustments like avoiding using your phone before bed or skipping that early evening cup of coffee. By tracking the time that they go to bed, as well as detailing the foods they eat or their nighttime routine, employees will have the data they need to identify potentially problematic habits.

Over the course of six weeks, your employees will enter notes about their daily sleep, including what they ate or drank before bed, how many times they woke up and how many hours they slept. Every two weeks, they'll read an informational article that provides tips for improving their sleep.

While tracking their sleep and implementing the tips outlined in the program won't work for every employee, doing so is the first step in improving sleep and sleep hygiene. It's important to note that this guide is for informational purposes only and is not intended to address serious sleep disorders. You should encourage employees to reach out to their doctor for more information regarding sleep disorders or issues that they may be having with sleep.

Beyond encouraging employees to focus on improving their sleep, engaging employees in a company-wide wellness initiative:

- Encourages socializing among employees
- Creates a dialogue between the employer and employees
- Publicly acknowledges employees, which has been shown to increase participation and success
- Fosters a healthy workforce

## Promoting the Six-week Sleep Program at Your Organization

Like any workplace initiative, success can be linked to program engagement and participation. Because this program is not based on offering prizes or incentives, you should focus your efforts on boosting employee participation and engagement rather than tracking progress. One simple way to do this is through employee communications.

Employee communication is vital to the success of a wellness program, and remaining in continuous contact with your employees is always important. The more conversation there is surrounding your sleep wellness program, the more likely your employees are to participate. Developing a healthy lifestyle change is hard, so your employees will need reinforcement and support.

See below for examples of daily social media posts, weekly emails and other materials, and contact HealthSure for posters and infographics.

## Outreach and Announcements



- Use the Sleep Program Announcement Video to easily share the news with employees.
- Add an announcement to your workplace newsletter.
- Post flyers in the break room, cafeteria or other high-traffic areas.
- Spread information by word of mouth.
- Post an announcement on your corporate intranet.
- Use social media to advertise the opportunity (e.g., Facebook® event, email calendar or corporate social networks).

## Social Media

Using your company's social media to promote this mini-wellness program allows you to reach employees who may not be receptive to print communications. Moreover, the peer-to-peer dynamics of social media can increase employee participation and engagement. By regularly sending your employees informative, up-to-date articles about sleep and wellness, you're keeping the importance of sleep a top-of-mind concern.

## Company Emails

What better way to promote your voluntary sleep program and remind employees to track their sleep than to send out a company email. Here are some sample templates.



### Announcement Email

Hello Employees,

Did you know that 1 in 3 U.S. adults fail to regularly get enough sleep? Not getting enough sleep can leave you vulnerable to a host of negative consequences. Your health and wellness is important to us, which is why is pleased to announce the Six-week Sleep Program!

This is a program designed to promote the importance of sleep and help you improve your sleep habits. To sign up for this voluntary program, contact [insert contact].

The final day for sign-ups is [insert date].

If you have any questions, feel free to contact [insert contact].

Happy exercising!



### Reminder Email

Hello Employees,

Only a few days left before the Six-week Sleep Program sign-up deadline! To sign up, contact [insert contact].

The final day for sign-ups is [insert date].

If you have any questions, feel free to contact [insert contact].

Let's get active!

## **Last Chance Reminder**

Hello Employees,

Today is your last chance to sign up for the Six-week Sleep Program! To sign up, contact [insert contact] before [insert date/time].

Don't give up before you start! Sign up today!



## **Welcome/Thanks for Joining Email**

Welcome to the [insert year] Six-week Sleep Program!

You can use this program to help improve your sleeping habits. This program features informational articles on sleep and tips for boosting sleep. You will be tasked with tracking your sleep daily in the program guide, which features space in which you can enter notes about your daily sleep, including what you ate or drank before bed, how many times you woke up and how many hours you slept.

Remember, getting enough sleep is essential for your health. Let's get started!



## **Weekly Reminder Email**

Hello Employees,

Congrats on completing Week [insert week number] of our sleep program. Don't forget to enter your daily sleep information in the program's tracking log. Having the most accurate data possible will help you identify trends and areas for improvement, so don't forget about logging your information!



## **Final Email**

Hello Employees,

You've finally reached the end, way to go! Congratulations on six weeks of tracking your sleep habits.

Thanks to everyone for participating! Just because the program is over does not mean you have to stop focusing on improving your sleep habits. Keep working hard and continuing to set and reach your goals.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact [insert contact].

## Other Low-cost Strategies to Address Workplace Fatigue

Fatigue in the workplace is a serious problem. Fatigued individuals are less productive, less focused, have more medical problems, are absent more often and are more likely to be involved in a job-related safety incident. Fatigue management can be a relatively easy and inexpensive wellness initiative to help alleviate this problem among your employees.

General changes in the workplace can also effectively address fatigue and its accompanying risks.

- Install proper lighting, designate quiet break areas and offer healthy food options in break rooms.
- Consider adjusting policies to allow for more frequent and restful breaks.
- Use machinery and equipment that eliminates or reduces any excessive physical demands of your employees. This can include ergonomic furniture and anti-fatigue matting.
- Ask employees what time(s) of the day they are most tired, and think of ways to address those times, (e.g., offering a short extra break, providing a healthy snack option or allowing them to listen to music). This is especially important for employees who work in safety-sensitive jobs where fatigue is a major hazard.

Take a look at your individual job descriptions and workloads as well to see if there may be a reason why a certain person or department may be struggling with fatigue. If you see that a job description is unbalanced or has had responsibilities added to it over the years, consider the following:

- Redesign the job to include a variety of mental and physical tasks instead of all physical or all mental.
- Eliminate any excessive demands from a job, either by deeming them unnecessary or sharing those responsibilities with another employee.
- Introduce job rotation in an effort to limit both mental and physical boredom and fatigue.

Taking even small actions is an important first step in addressing fatigue in your workplace. Contact HealthSure for educational materials and posters to assist in your workplace fatigue management efforts.