

A Benefits Xtra

Your Health & Benefits Awareness resource published by the Human Resources Department at ABX Air, Inc.

Volume 1 ~ Issue 9 ~ April 4, 2003



ABX proudly supports the American Troops!

Look for the next issue of *A Benefits Xtra* with your May 2 paycheck. Please e-mail your questions or comments to abx.benefits@airborne.com.

Copyright © ABX Air, Inc., 2003

Make Time for Sleep!

Twenty-five percent of American workers have jobs requiring them to work nights or on shift rotations. As many ABX employees know, working the night shift takes a disciplined focus to make sure you receive enough sleep each day.

How much sleep do I need?

There is no normal amount of sleep, although many experts recommend eight hours for good health and optimum performance. The average adult gets seven to eight, while some people need as little as six hours and others as much as nine hours. To a large degree, heredity and how your body experiences the sleep cycle determine the amount of sleep you require.

What is the sleep cycle?

Our sleep cycle is a naturally occurring cycle of deep and light sleep. Each cycle lasts approximately 90 minutes. When you first fall asleep, you plunge into deep sleep. This takes

about 30 minutes. You remain in deep sleep for approximately 45 minutes, after which time you surface to dream sleep (also called rapid eye movement [REM] sleep). After 10 minutes of REM sleep, you go back to deep sleep. This is a successful design for sleep, as each cycle contains deep sleep and REM sleep, both essential for healthy rest.

A normal sleeper will experience approximately five cycles per night. During these cycles, you also will have repeated zones of light sleep, when you can wake up easily. According to the experts, you need to protect these natural sleep cycles. In his book *Sleep Secrets for Shift Workers & People with Off-Beat Schedules*, sleep expert David Morgan recommends the following sleep strategies to help you make time for sleep.

Night Shift

Preparation:

Avoid alcohol and caffeine after you complete your shift or if you are planning to sleep when you arrive home. According to David Morgan, a simple rule of thumb for caffeine is no more than three cups per day and no coffee for at

least four hours before sleep. Alcohol after the shift should be avoided as it suppresses REM sleep.

After working all night, if the sun is up, wear dark glasses while driving home to avoid a wakefulness response to the sun.

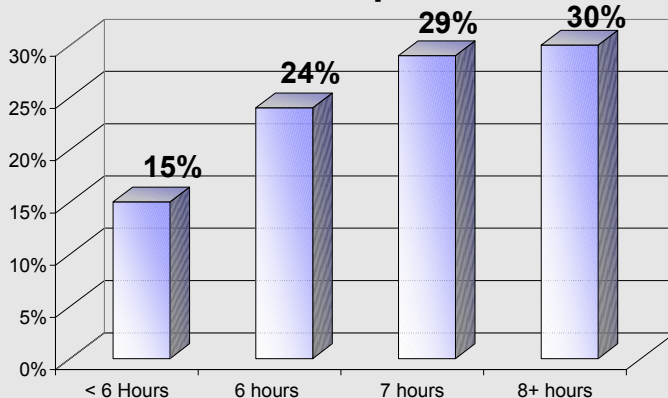
Some people prefer to stay up all morning during their morning energy surge and then go to bed at midday. Others get into bed as soon as possible after their shift is over. The important thing is to find a routine that works best for you and then stick to it. Shift workers often have to schedule their day sleep without allowing time to “switch off the job.” Try to relax before going to bed. Take a warm bath, read,

Please see *Make time for sleep!* on page 2.



ABX Snapshot

American Sleep Habits 2002



Questions & Answers

Q. My child is particularly stressed by today's world events. Where can I get help?

A. There are several resources available to you. Visit United Health Care's well-being and support web site at www.optumanswers.com. This site has a number of helpful articles about dealing with the uncertainty of today's world events.

You also can call our Employee Assistance Program at (800) 788-5614 and speak with a trained counselor. If necessary, you can be referred to a mental health professional. All calls are confidential.

Q. Where can I find information about ABX's military leave policy?

A. The military leave policy is published on the ABX Air benefits web site.

Visit www.abxair.com and click on the benefits tab and then on Emergency Military Leave.

When Daddy or Mommy is in the Military

Children may experience a number of feelings when a parent is called to active duty. They express their feelings in different ways, and their outward behavior is not always a good reflection of what they are experiencing inside.

Here's how the parent remaining at home can provide support and assistance to children when the other parent is called to active duty:

- Talk with your children openly, honestly, and directly about where the reservist is going and why as well as what the parent is likely to be doing. Prepare the child for the soldier's absence at events such as soccer games that the parent otherwise would have attended.

- Make it safe to express feelings. Talk about the negative emotions as well as the positive ones.

- Give lots of hugs, and remind your children of how much you love them – and how much the missing parent cares for them, as well.

- Place photos of the missing parent at the child's

eye level. Be sure each child has a special picture that was taken with the parent who is on active duty.

- Routine is important. Keep to the same family rules and schedule as you had when both parents were home.

- Organize special outings that will be fun for the children, particularly on weekends and holidays.

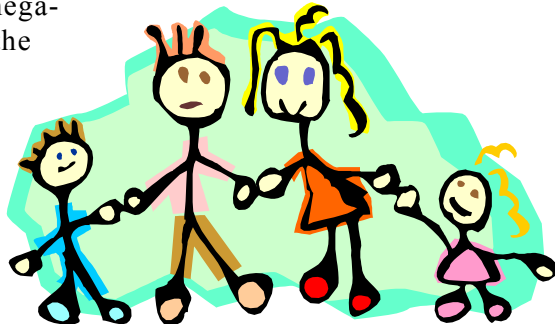
- Encourage writing letters to the missing parent. Include school work or drawings with the letters.

- Ask each child to select a chore to do that the missing parent would ordinarily perform. The child will feel like a contributor to the household, and the regular chore will help develop responsibility.

- Keep in touch with the child's teachers. Work together to provide healthy channels for negative behaviors and "acting out."

There may be some emotional ups and downs when a parent is called to active duty, but by communicating clearly, providing consistent structure, and giving lots of hugs, the parent who stays at home can help the child cope with the pain of separation.

Source: United Behavioral Health



Make time for sleep! (Continued from page 1)

listen to music, and do not eat heavily just before going to bed.

Daytime Sleep Strategy:

- Maintain a quiet environment.
- Switch off the ringer on your telephone.
- Turn off noisy appliances.
- Some people find background "white noise" to be helpful.
- Use foam earplugs (but don't plug your ears so thoroughly that you can't hear a smoke alarm).
- Maintain a dark sleep room by using dark curtains and/or

Venetian blinds.

Avoid using sleeping pills for longer than one month. According to the American Medical Association Guide to Better Sleep, most sleeping pills are habit-forming and if used longer than two to three weeks may cause withdrawal effects and increased insomnia.

Sources: Sleep Secrets for Shift Workers & People with Off-Beat Schedules

www.sleepfoundation.org
American Medical Association

What tips do ABX employees have for sleep during the day?

Norma Smith Third shift Sort Supervisor uses Styrofoam in the windows to help darken the room during the day.



Bob Eversman Third shift Line Service Technician reports he uses window tint in the bedroom to keep it dark.

