

Road to Better Health

Health & Wellness
Newsletter Brought to you by
**UrgentCare
Travel**
Medical Clinics For Truckers
Located at **Pilot**

September 15, 2015

Ask the Nurse Practitioner



Truck Driver Sleep Tips

Q: What should I avoid before bedtime to help get a good night's sleep?

A: Before bedtime, you should avoid heavy or spicy meals, drinking too much liquid (including alcohol), avoid caffeine and nicotine as they are stimulants that can affect your body for hours, and exposure to light from television and electronics.

Q: What are some of the effects of sleep deprivation?

A: Effects include irritability, slower reactions, increased risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and infections.

Q: If I have trouble sleeping, does that mean I have sleep apnea? Would I then lose my driving job?

A: There are many potential reasons why you may have trouble sleeping, including your diet, physical well-being and your sleep environment. Work with a health professional to discuss your sleep situation. Having a sleep disorder doesn't have to mean going out of service.

Quick Sleep Tips for Truck Drivers

The following is excerpted from the **Quick Sleep Tips for Truck Drivers** brochure published by the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. To download the complete brochure, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2014-150/pdfs/2014-150.pdf>

Good sleep is as important as proper nutrition and exercise. Your body is busy during sleep, repairing wear and tear and getting you in shape for a new day. Without enough sleep, you might experience:



- Slower reactions, a cloudy mind, or a bad mood
- Weakening of body defenses, increasing your risk for infections, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- Increased appetite, over eating, and obesity

A good sleep environment improves sleep quality. Your sleep environment may depend on your schedule, but you can improve your sleep environment on the road or at home.

- **Keep safety in mind.** Park with a balance of quiet and safety in mind.
- **Block out all light.** Close all curtains and truck shades, or use an eye mask.
- **Block out noise.** Use ear plugs or a “white noise” machine like a fan to block out noises. Silence phones and assign an audible ringtone to important contacts to minimize distractions.
- **Keep your cab or bedroom temperature cool.** People's temperature preferences vary, so keep your room temperature comfortable for you.
- **Get comfortable.** You spend one third of your life in bed, so use a comfortable mattress and pillow. Consider upgrading or replacing the mattress in your sleeper if it is old or uncomfortable.

Quick Sleep Tips for Truck Drivers article continued on next page

UrgentCareTravel
Booth #848



ATA Management Conference
& Exhibition ★ Philadelphia
October 17-20, 2015

Avoid before bedtime:

- Heavy or spicy meals (2–3 hours before bed)
- Liquids (to avoid getting up to use the bathroom), especially alcohol, which causes sleep disturbances
- Caffeine (according to your own sensitivity)—this stimulant can help you stay awake while driving, but remember it can affect your body for five hours or more so plan your intake so that it does not prevent you from getting good sleep
- Nicotine and other stimulants
- Exposure to light from television and electronics (tablets, computers, etc.)—studies show that light from these devices can disturb your sleep



Try to get 7–9 hours of sleep each day; most people need this amount. Be aware of your body's natural feelings of sleepiness. When you are driving, try to plan your stops and sleep breaks to match your natural sleep times. Sleeping at about the same times every day helps improve sleep. Getting sufficient and regular sleep actually will help you fall asleep faster and sleep better in the future. Better sleep will lead to better health and increased alertness. Remember, any exercise during the day that does not take away from sleep time improves sleep.

Driving a truck is a stressful, demanding job. Follow a relaxing routine within an hour or more of bedtime. This will signal to your brain that it is time to sleep. Brushing your teeth, washing your face, and getting undressed for bed will help you relax and fall asleep.

Sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea and insomnia are more common than most people realize. See your doctor if you spend 7–9 hours in bed but: 1) You consistently take more than 30 minutes to fall asleep, 2) You consistently awaken several times during sleep or for long periods, 3) You take frequent naps and 4) You often feel sleepy, especially at inappropriate times. Having a sleep disorder doesn't have to mean going out of service. Simple changes may lessen symptoms. Talk to a medical professional to help you address any sleep issues.

About UrgentCareTravel

UrgentCareTravel, a network of medical clinics for truckers, is an organization dedicated to improving the health and quality of life of truck drivers and families. In partnership with Pilot Flying J, UrgentCareTravel addresses one of the trucking industry's biggest challenges of offering easily accessible and affordable healthcare services for truck drivers. Located at Pilot Flying J Travel Centers, UrgentCareTravel clinics offer occupational medical services (DOT/non-DOT physicals, workers comp, sleep apnea screening, urine/hair drug screens, etc.) and primary care services (chronic disease screening and management (e.g. diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension), blood pressure checks, Men's & Women's wellness exams, wound care, cold/cough/flu, upper respiratory infections, sinus infections, ear infections, muscle pain/strain, etc.).

UrgentCareTravel's **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** provides members with DOT Physicals and unlimited no deductible / no co-pay visits (in-clinic services) at UrgentCareTravel locations for a low monthly fee. With health insurance plans costing more, providing less medical coverage and requiring higher deductible payments, UrgentCareTravel's **GOLD Healthcare Membership program** is an affordable option to address the healthcare needs of drivers, local businesses and communities. To enroll or request additional information about the **Gold Healthcare Membership Program**, please contact an UrgentCareTravel clinic or send an e-mail to services@urgentcaretravel.com.

UrgentCareTravel Locations

Knoxville, TN

7200 Strawberry Plains Pike
Knoxville, TN 37914
(865) 329-9492

Oklahoma City, OK

406 South Morgan Road
Oklahoma City, OK 73128
(405) 789-0212

Atlanta, GA Metro Area

970 Cassville-White Rd NE
Cartersville, GA 30120
(770) 386-0707

Dallas, TX

7383 Bonnie View Rd
Dallas, TX 75241
(214) 238-0797

