



# Guide to a good nights sleep



## SLEEP PATTERN

A regular sleeping pattern can improve the symptoms of daytime sleepiness:

- Go to sleep and wake up at a sensible time every day so that your body 'gets used' to falling asleep at a certain time
- Avoid having naps in the daytime and early in the evening; this will result in you going to bed at a later time at night and then having poor quality sleep.
- Aim for up to 8 hours sleep per night.

## STRESS

Stress is known to affect the ability to fall asleep. Simple steps can be taken to reduce the affect of stress before sleep:

- Try to relax before bed – have a warm bath, listen to soft music, read, try Yoga, deep breathing exercises.
- Avoid watching the TV before bed – it is very engaging.
- Do not take your worries to bed - if it helps, write a problem list/diary before bed that you can deal with the next day.
- If you have not fallen asleep within 30 minutes, get up and go into another room, read or have a light snack. Simply lying there trying to sleep will leave you frustrated and then much less likely to fall asleep.

## SLEEPING ENVIROMENT

- Ensure that your bedclothes are comfortable, your mattress is supportive and you don't sleep with too many pillows
- Ensure that your bedroom is not too hot or too cold.
- Do not use your bedroom as an office or recreational space. Let your body associate your bedroom as a place for sleep.

## ALCOHOL AND MEDICATION

- Alcohol consumption reduces quality of sleep. Although alcohol consumption may be effective in helping you fall asleep, it will impair sleep during the second half of the night and lead a reduction in overall sleep time
- Many medications may cause sleepiness or difficulty sleeping. Ask your doctor if medications you are taking can lead to sleepiness or difficulty sleeping as a side effect.

## CAFFEINE AND SMOKING

- Caffeine (coffee, tea, coke, chocolate) is a stimulant; it will keep you awake and also can make you go to the toilet more regularly.  
Cigarettes contain Nicotine, which is also a stimulant

## WEIGHT

- Weight reduction can improve symptoms associated with Sleep Apnoea and other weight related disorders

## EXERCISE

- Exercise, especially when taken in the afternoon can help deepen sleep. However, avoid exercising within 2-4 hours of bedtime as this can decrease you ability to fall asleep



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