

Healthy Habits for a Good Night's Sleep

This leaflet provides information and advice about sleep behaviour and simple changes that may help improve the quality of your sleep.

Why is it important to have a good night's sleep?

There are strong links between sleep quality and some causes of dizziness. Therefore, it is important to consider sleep behaviour in people with dizziness. There are some daily habits you can do to improve your sleep.

What can I do to improve my sleep?

'Sleep Hygiene' refers to a series of healthy sleep habits that can improve your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep. These habits are the most effective long-term treatment for people with chronic poor sleep. It can help you address the thoughts and behaviors that prevent you from sleeping well. It also includes techniques for stress reduction, relaxation and sleep schedule management.

Your daily routines, what you eat and drink, the medications you take, how you plan your days and how you choose to spend your evenings can significantly impact your quality of sleep. Even a few slight adjustments can mean the difference between sound sleep and a restless night.

Completing a two-week sleep diary can help you understand how your routines affect your sleep.

7 hours of sleep is the best starting point for adults. Make it one of your top health priorities to try to sleep at least 7-8 hours each night. Keep in mind that healthy sleep is good quality and consistent over time.

There are healthcare 'apps' that have been shown to help with sleep and they can be downloaded onto your phone. The following have been recommended by the NHS: Sleepio, Every Mind matters and Headspace.

Top Tips

Follow these tips to establish healthy sleep habits:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Get up and go to bed at the same time every day, even on weekends or during holidays.
- Set a bedtime that is early enough for you to get at least 7 hours of sleep.
- Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy and don't go past your natural sleepy point. Learn to recognise when your body is ready for sleep at night.
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing. Keep the room at a comfortable, cool temperature.
- Limit exposure to bright light in the evenings.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime. If you are hungry at night, eat a light, healthy slow energy release snack.
- Exercise regularly: 30 minutes of moderate exertion exercise in the daylight, preferably the morning, every day
- Maintain a healthy diet.
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine and other stimulants altogether if possible.
- Avoid consuming alcohol before bedtime.
- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime and try not to drink anything for 90 minutes before bed. Go to the toilet before going to bed.
- If your mind goes over things in bed write a detailed note or list before you go to sleep.
- Have a daytime nap (20-40 minutes) but try to do this before 3-4pm.

Good sleep habits: worksheet

Looking at your sleep diary and routine what things do you think you can change to help you get to sleep and stay asleep?

Good sleep habits	Comments Am I doing this? How am I doing it? How can I improve it?
Set a constant bed time	
Set a constant wake time	
Do not take naps after 3pm	
Have a pre-sleep ritual	
Use the bed only for sleep and sex	
If unable to sleep for more than 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something quiet and relaxing	
Take a warm bath	
Keep temperature of room constant not too warm, not too cold	
Make the bedroom a relaxing and soothing place to be.	
Keep the bedroom dark	
Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed	
Eat a light snack before bed	
Avoid stimulating activities; do mentally quiet tasks	
Use relaxation techniques (breathing, imagery)	