

Rehab Services



Achieving Better Sleep

A guide for patients and carers

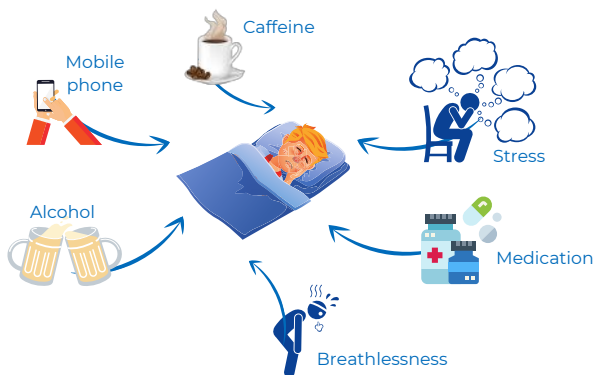


How much sleep do I need?

Sleep is fundamental to physical recovery, emotional resilience and consolidation of our memory. However most people will experience problems sleeping at some point in their life.

If you are ill, sleep can be hard because of anxiety and worry about treatment or uncertainty about the future.

What causes sleep disruption?



Sleep disturbance can be caused by a number of factors:

- Emotional factors - stress, anxiety, depression
- Physical factors - pain, breathlessness, bladder issues, lack of exercise
- Environmental factors - noise, light, temperature of the bedroom
- Change of daily routine - travel, appointments, change in work hours
- Medication, alcohol and caffeine

How much sleep do I need?

This varies from person to person. Think about what kind of sleeper are you? A morning lark or a night owl. Sleep patterns can vary with age with older people often needing less than younger adults. It may be worth considering the quality and quantity of your sleep. Even when you don't sleep you may benefit from resting.

What happens when I sleep?

Sleep is a passive process. Sleep flows through cycles throughout each night. Stages of sleep can be thought of like a staircase, as you descend downward your sleep deepens as you climb up the stairs your sleep becomes lighter. During each night you will travel up and down a number of times. Short periods of wakefulness during the night are normal. We tend to enter deep sleep after 20 minutes.

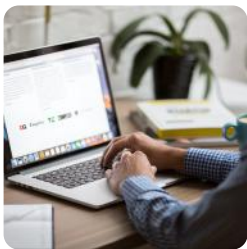
Stages of sleep



How can I improve my sleep pattern?

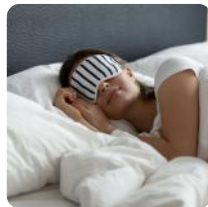
The following suggestions are examples of good sleep habits to help you achieve a more restful nights sleep.

- The body likes sleep consistency - try to take control of your body by setting a wake-up time everyday.
- Reduce or avoid sleeping during the day - any naps longer than 30 to 40 minutes will increase the chances of having a disturbed nights sleep. Most people will take a nap in the afternoon which is generally not a bad thing to do.
- Take regular exercise - this can promote more restful sleep.
- Strenuous exercise should be avoided 2 to 3 hours before you go to sleep.
- Avoid going to bed hungry or too full.
- Regular exposure to natural light - this is particularly important for older people as light exposure helps maintain a healthy sleep and wake cycle.



- Reserve the bed for sleeping - avoid using it as an office.

- Free yourself from toxins - limit or avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine before bedtime. These are stimulants and can cause difficulty falling asleep, awakening during the night and shallow sleep. Toxins usually take 4 to 5 hours to move through your body.
- Sleeping Environment - keep the bedroom quiet, dark and at a comfortable temperature. It has been suggested that maintaining a cool core temperature can aid sleep, so try and keep the room well ventilated. Carpets, earplugs and thicker curtains may help.
- Try not to take your worries to bed - It may help to discuss any concerns or worries with a family member or friend or you may benefit from speaking to a counsellor or health professional.



- Worry Journal - keep a notebook by the side of your bed to jot down any worries. The act of recording these thoughts can reduce the intensity of them. It may also be helpful to record other things that come in to your mind at night like a shopping list or telephone calls you need to make the next day.

- Healthy pre-sleep routine - to help to reduce anxiety and muscle tension practice deep breathing and relaxation techniques. A few minutes reading or listening to music or audio books may also help.

- Don't force yourself to try to go to sleep - this will only make your mind and body more alert. If you are unable to sleep 'get up and start again'. Leave the bedroom, read a book, have a light snack or carry out a peaceful activity. Return to bed when you feel sleepy. Avoid bright light during this time. Hiding clocks from view will prevent you constantly checking the time.



- Complementary Therapies – these can be helpful for disturbed sleep. At Hospice Isle of Man we have trained therapists who can offer relaxation, aromatherapy and reflexology.
- Medication - sometimes a short course of medication to aid sleep may be necessary. This is usually arranged by your doctor. Many medications can cause sleeplessness as a side effect. Your doctor or pharmacist will discuss this with you.



Get into the sleep zone

Below are some different sleep apps to help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer.



Sleep School



Calm



Headspace



Pzizz



Sleepio



Sleep Station



Insight Timer

Or, visit our useful resources on our Hospice website

<https://www.hospice.org.im/our-care/hospice-care/our-adult-services/rehabilitation/rehabresources/sleep/>

<https://www.hospice.org.im/our-care/hospice-care/our-adult-services/rehabilitation/rehabresources/relaxation-and-mindfulness/>

Questions?

Any other questions please contact:

Physiotherapist
01624 647422

Occupational Therapist
01624 647447

Rehabilitation Department
Hospice Isle of Man
Strang
Isle of Man
IM4 4RP



Hospice
ISLE OF MAN