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Tips for Wellbeing Series No 7

Improving Sleep

Tips for getting a good night's rest

What is the problem?

Difficulties with sleep can arise for a number of reasons: stress, depression, anxious worrying, pregnancy, disrupted sleep patterns, physical ill-health and sleep disorders. The amount of sleep needed differs from person to person but is usually between 6 and 9 hours. Waking up feeling tired and unrested on a consistent basis is a sign that sleep is not working well.

What can be done about it?

Try some of these sleep tips:

- > Have a regular sleep pattern, i.e. aim to go to bed and get up around the same time each day.
- > Get enough physical exercise during the day time.
- > Spend the right amount of time in bed.
- > Immediately upon getting up let as much natural light in the house as possible, and try to spend some time outdoors in the morning.
- > Wind down and relax before going to bed. This includes turning off screens, which have the kind of blue light that keeps your brain awake.
- > Bed is for sleeping, not entertainment. Get the TV out of the bedroom, turn off the computer and phone as they distract you from good sleep habits.
- > Have a comfortable bedroom – quiet, dark and the right temperature (cooler rather than too hot), comfortable bed and pillows.
- > Avoid coffee, tea, coke or other soft drinks that contain caffeine or artificial colourings late in the afternoon, cigarettes and alcohol before bed.
- > Avoid daytime naps, particularly long ones. A short nap of about 15 minutes earlier in the afternoon may be refreshing.
- > Don't lie there watching the clock. If you can't sleep, get up and do something relaxing such as read a book until you are sleepy again, then return to bed.
- > Turn off the worrying about sleep. Many poor sleepers think they get less sleep than they actually do. Delay worries until the next morning, and use relaxation exercises to bring your body closer to sleep

- > If thinking about a problem keeps you awake at night, write it down in a notebook and revisit it the next day.
- > Snoring is not healthy breathing. Seek medical attention if snoring is a regular problem.
- > Consult a counsellor or doctor.
- > Consult a Sleep Clinic.

For further reference

Websites:

- > Sleep education tools - <https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/>

Apps:

- > Sleep
- > Relax and sleep with Glenn Harold
- > sleep easy

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