

IS THERE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SLEEP WE NEED?

- Around 8 hours of sleep is the aim **however** some people have more or less sleep
- The **Quality** of sleep is important not **Quantity**
- Your past sleep is important; if you have never been someone who requires a lot of sleep you may not need a lot of sleep now.

BENEFITS OF SLEEP

- Psychological restoration.
- Physiological process rejuvenating body.
- Quality of life.

COMMON SLEEPING DIFFICULTIES

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty remaining asleep
- Persistent early morning waking
- Waking unrefreshed

We all experience sleep difficulties at some time. 1/3 people suffer from sleep problems in any given year, and 15-20% of adults have regular sleep problems.

5 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OF POOR QUALITY SLEEP, KEEP THE BODY IN A STATE OF AROUSAL

1. **Biological:** level of physiological arousal, sleep disorders, muscle tension, pain.
2. **Psychological:** levels of psychological distress / arousal, stress, anxiety and depression
3. **Use of drugs:** Narcotics, alcohol, illegal drugs, sleeping tablets.
4. **Environment :** Food, exercise, napping, sleeping in, caffeine, cigarettes, light, temperature, air ventilation, bed time activities
5. **Sleep Conditioning:** Anxiety about another sleepless night.

CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS our 24-hour body clock linked to levels of sunlight and darkness, levels of different body chemicals rise and fall in time with our circadian cycle. 90-minute cycles altering from alertness to sleepiness, gives us opportunity to read out sleep patterns and by catching the peak of sleepiness or riding this “*wave of sleepiness*” into sleep, makes the likelihood of falling asleep, increased.

SLEEP PATTERN: normal adult sleep has a distinct pattern which cycles throughout the night: typically, there are 4-6 sleep cycles per night, lasting 70-90 minutes each cycle. at the end of the cycle you are almost awake. the more relaxed we are when we go to sleep, the less chance there is of awakening at the times of light sleep during the night.

AWAKE: Short duration of wake

STAGE 1: occurs between the transition from wakefulness to sleep stage or following body movements during sleep and lasts between 1 –7 minutes.

STAGE 2 10-25 minutes. Known as intermediate levels of sleep, which throughout the night we spend most time in

STAGE 3 / 4 – (Deep Sleep are the deepest level of sleep and rest) is associated with psychological restoration. These stages last for 30-40 minutes in the first cycle and decreases in subsequent cycles. Lowest heart rate, blood pressure and your breathing rate also decreases. It is difficult to be woken from these stages. Associated with night terrors and sleep walking. Stage 4 decrease with age why? No one has identified yet.

SLEEP HYGIENE

REM (RAPID EYE MOVEMENT) begins 90 –120 minutes after sleep onset and is associated with psychological restoration and possibly memory formation. Heightened level of arousal and this is the time we have dreams and nightmares.

Tips for improving sleep

Begin by monitoring sleep patterns. Use a diary to identify time of sleep / awake, and the impact of stress levels, food consumption, mood, exercise, etc. We can then improve our sleep quality by targeting the factors that we have identified.

STRESS

Techniques to reduce the effect of stress on sleep

- Thought stopping
- Planned worry time, worry list by bed
- Positive and calming self-talk
- Slow abdominal breathing or a relaxation technique

If you can't sleep after 30 minutes, get up and do something relaxing or monotonous till you feel sleepy again

ENVIRONMENT

- Ensure an environment that helps sleep
- Try to make your bedroom quiet, dark, cool and well ventilated
- Mattress and pillow size, type, can affect sleep quality

PHYSICAL FACTORS

- Use relaxation techniques at night (e.g. position, heat, stretches)
- Finish exercising at least three hours before sleep
- Don't be over full or hungry when you go to sleep
- Limit fluid intake before bedtime to reduce awakenings
- Use daytime exercise to reduce stress and physical tension
- Soaking in a hot bath before bed can also help to induce sleep

DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

- Avoid caffeine-based drinks for at least 6 hours before bedtime or try eliminating it altogether for a 2-week trial to see if your sleep improves.
- Avoid alcohol for at least two hours before bedtime.
- Quit smoking or avoid nicotine, at least two hours before bedtime.
- Sleeping (sedating) medication may help you to get to sleep but will decrease the restorative effects of sleep.

SLEEP HABITS

- Go to sleep when sleepy and get up at a regular time.
- Get into a regular bedtime routine that allows you time to unwind
- Minimise daytime naps
- Avoid exposure to bright light before sleep
- Avoid 'clock watching'
- Avoid worrying in bed about not sleeping

SLEEP MANAGEMENT DIARY

Begin by monitoring and exploring your sleep patterns. Using a diary to identify time of sleep / awake, stress levels, food consumption, mood, exercise, and any other factors that may be contributing to sleep quality.

Formulate a sleep management plan

Based on your monitoring, use the following questions and directions to help explore your sleep.

What factors are contributing to the problem?

From the tip sheet, are four options I could try to help manage the factors?

Implement and then review the plan. What is working? What is not working?

What else do I need to try?

Sweet Dreams