



Sleep: How Important Is It? and What Can I Do To Sleep Better?

How Important Is Sleep?

Sleep is good for both physical and mental health. It doesn't matter how much you sleep, what is more important is how you feel physically and mentally as a result of your sleep pattern.

I need some help getting off to sleep, what can I do?

Everybody has problems getting off to sleep at times. There are a variety of things which people say have helped them to sleep.

There are some things you may find helpful:-

- ❖ Go to bed when you are sleepy and get up at the same time every morning. Do not sleep in late in the mornings trying to make up for "lost sleep" and, if you think you have insomnia, do not take naps during the day.
- ❖ Set aside time for problem solving during the day, not last thing at night. Identify any problems that are causing you to be anxious and try to resolve these problems by making decisions.
- ❖ Do not lie in bed worrying for long periods of time. If you cannot sleep, get out of bed and do something that is distracting yet relaxing, such as listening to music. (It will be important to plan appropriate activities in advance.) Return to bed only when you feel sleepy again.
- ❖ Do not use alcohol to help you sleep.
- ❖ If you are experiencing insomnia, avoid drinking caffeinated drinks after about 4pm and do not drink more than two cups of caffeinated drinks each day.
- ❖ Do not smoke for at least an hour (preferably an hour and a half) before going to bed.
- ❖ Avoid sleeping pills: they do not provide a long-term solution to sleeping problems.
- ❖ If you sleep in a noisy place, try to reduce noise levels by closing windows and doors and wearing earplugs.
- ❖ Ensure the room is dark and that the morning light does not filter in. If you have a tendency to *oversleep*, it may be helpful to let the morning light enter the bedroom.
- ❖ Getting to sleep when you are comfortable is much easier than getting to sleep when you are hungry, cold, in some kind of physical pain, or when you need to go to the toilet. Make sure all your immediate needs have been met before you go to bed.

- ❖ Regular exercise during the day or early evening can improve sleeping patterns. Try to avoid exercise late in the evening as this may make it more difficult for you to get to sleep (with the exception of sex which may *help* you to sleep).
- ❖ By doing the same thing every night before you go to bed you can improve your chances of falling asleep quickly. It is a good idea to develop a short routine involving things like washing your face and cleaning your teeth, which you can easily perform before going to bed at night. A hot bath for 20 minutes may also be helpful.

You can learn more about the Lancashire Early Intervention Service by visiting our website:-

www.hope-health-recovery.org.uk

Email: info@hope-health-recovery.org.uk

Version 3: April 2010
Review Date: April 2012