

I have trouble **SLEEPING**



When thinking about your health there is lots to consider. Attending appointments and taking medication is important if you have a long term condition but also things like healthy eating and sleep are important to think about too. You can find out why it is important and how you can help improve your sleep below.



Why do you need sleep?

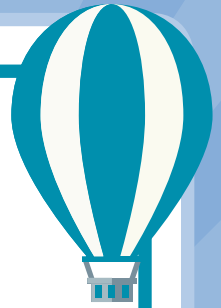
You need good sleep so you can grow and develop. There are three main ways that sleep helps you:

- 1 Whilst you sleep a growth hormone is released which helps you to grow.
- 2 Sleep helps the brain to concentrate; to make sense of the day's events and consolidate the things you learnt at school, college or work.
- 3 Sleep is "detoxifying" and helps your brain develop and helps you feel happy and stable. If you are not getting enough sleep you may feel low and you may find it harder to concentrate.

Why do young people find sleep difficult?

Two main reasons:

- 1 There may be lots going on in your life; family, friends, social media, sports, study or work, worry. This can mean that sleep isn't a priority or that when you do go to bed your mind is very busy and you find it hard to get to sleep.
- 2 When you're a teenager, there is a delay in the time when melatonin (one of our sleep hormones that makes us sleepy) is released. This means you do not feel so tired in the evening so your body is often not ready to fall asleep until later. This is known as a circadian rhythm or our body clock. Then you may do things to stop you being bored (like TV and phone) which may cause you to stay awake longer!



Top tips and strategies

Sleep is very important for young people. However, only 15% get the correct amount of sleep each night. As a young person or young adult you should be getting between eight and ten hours sleep a night. Research shows that too little sleep can have a negative impact on the physical, psychological, cognitive and social health of young people.

If you are finding sleep difficult here are a few different things that might be able to help you:

Think about your sleep

Sometimes we don't think about sleep and how important it is. It might help to think about what you do before bed and what time you go to sleep and wake up. There are a number of apps that might help you become aware of your sleep patterns or you could write it down. Hopefully this will help you to work out where you are losing out on sleep.

Develop a routine

Think back to when you were a child, you might have eaten dinner, had a quiet play, bath and then bed. Just because you are older doesn't mean that routine isn't important. It helps your body and brain know it is time to wind down and sleep. Try to think about what might help you now, listening to music, a bath, relaxation exercises such as yoga. Try and create time to relax. If you notice you are feeling a bit worried or anxious before bed, this might help too.



Top tips and strategies

Have a consistent sleep schedule

Go to bed at the same time each night, and try to get up at the same time each day to help retrain your brain, even on weekends. A consistent sleep schedule will help you feel less tired as it lets your body get in sync with its natural patterns. Try not to sleep in the afternoon too. If you do need to have a nap, try to make sure that you don't have one after 3.00pm, as this will affect your sleep in the evening.

Limit use of TVs, phones and screens before bed

Light and movement from electronic devices can make your brain think it needs to wake up. Although it can be hard, see if you can try to avoid using your phone or other devices in the hour before you go to sleep and do other activities that will help relax you instead. This helps your body to prepare for sleep.

Good sleep environment

Your bedroom should be just for sleeping rather than other activities, such as watching TV. Your bed should be comfortable and your bedroom should be quiet, dark and cool; use blackout blinds or an eye mask if needed. Try to let in natural light in the morning to signal to your body to wake-up.



Top tips and strategies

Have regular exercise

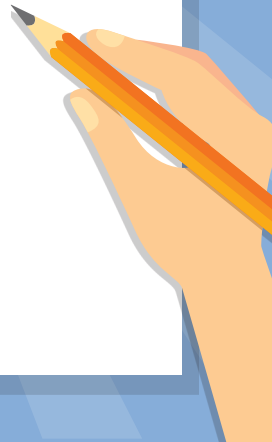
Make sure this is not just before bed as that will wake you up just when you need to be getting to sleep!

Think about what you are eating and drinking before going to bed

Eating too much or too little before you go to sleep can stop you from sleeping as it may cause your stomach discomfort. It can also help to try and avoid food and drinks with caffeine (such as coffee, tea, caffeinated fizzy drinks and chocolate) in the evening. These can impact on your sleep by preventing deep sleep. Cigarettes and alcohol will also interfere with sleep.

Have a to-do list by your bed

This means that if you remember something that you need to do the next day you can write it down instead of worrying about it.



WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Your healthcare team are there to help support you with both your physical health and other things that are going on for you. They may be able to help provide support and ideas or know of additional services in the hospital that can help you.

Some teams have a psychologist as part of the team who you can talk to about what is going on. They may be able to provide support and help you identify ways to improve your sleep. A member of your healthcare team can make a referral.

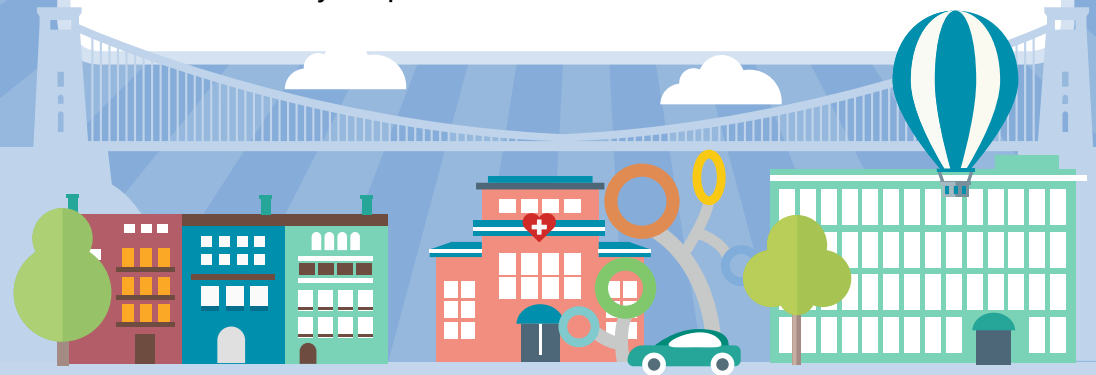
Links to appropriate resources

Childline provides support for young people up to the age of 19. They have information about sleep that can be found at www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/problems-sleeping/. You can contact them on 0800 1111 to talk or message them through their website if you need to talk to someone.

<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/teens-and-sleep>

There are a number of apps that can support you with sleep, from monitoring your sleep to providing relaxation exercises.

You can also find information on the 'NHS Go' app that you can download onto your phone.



These toolkits have been written by NHS clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists working for University Hospitals Bristol. They have been co-designed with service users and healthcare staff. These toolkits are only intended to provide general advice and information. Please discuss your individual needs with your doctor or specialist nurse. If you would like more information about psychology services please go to:

<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/support-for-patients/psychological-health-services/>

We would like to thank patients and other healthcare staff for their contributions to this toolkit.

For access to other patient toolkits please go to the following address:

<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/support-for-patients/psychological-health-services/resources/>

For this leaflet in large print or PDF format, please email patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk

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