

Sleep hygiene

***Information for
patients and carers***

Grampian Pain Service

What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is the term used for all the bedtime habits that help you get a good night's sleep.

Why does sleep matter?

Sleep is a vital part of our lives. It helps our wellbeing, happiness and our ability to carry out daily activities.

Not being able to fall asleep or stay asleep is very common and affects around 25% (one quarter) of people.

How much sleep is normal?

This varies depending on your age, with older people needing less than young adults and children.

Research suggests around 8 hours is a healthy amount.

What can disturb sleep?

Many factors can cause poor sleep:

- Medical
Stomach, bowel or urinary problems, pain, breathing problems, medications
- Emotional
Anxiety, stress, depression, worry
- Lifestyle
Work, use of TV / electronic devices late at night
- Drugs and alcohol
- Change in daytime habits
Shift work, travelling
- Environmental factors
Light, noise, temperature

Why is sleep hygiene important?

Sleep hygiene helps your wellbeing, health and ability to carry out tasks during the day.

Over time people who are sleep deprived have:

- More pain
- Decreased performance and alertness
- More medical problems (including high blood pressure and heart trouble).

How can I improve my sleep hygiene?

- Go to bed the same time each day.
- Make sleep a priority.
- Get regular exercise and exposure to natural light during the day.
- Try to create a relaxing routine. Try a warm bath, relaxation exercises (on CD or download) before bed. You can learn about relaxation and mindfulness during our Pain Management Program.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark and at a comfortable temperature.
- If pain is a problem, try timing your pain medication so it's working best when you are trying to get to sleep.

What things should I avoid?

- Avoid resting or sleeping during the day. Naps for longer than 30 minutes can interfere with sleep at night
- Don't watch TV or use electronic devices (such as phones, tablets or computers) in the hour before bed. The light from these devices has a big impact on sleep quality and quantity.

If possible ban these devices from the bedroom or make sure they are turned to silent to stop alerts or calls interrupting your sleep.

- Avoid caffeine, alcohol or nicotine. These are stimulants and can cause difficulty getting to sleep and interfere with sleep quality. Alcohol leads to poor sleep and disturbances through the night.
- Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime.
- Don't force yourself to go to sleep. This can make you more alert and make it more difficult to get to sleep.
- If you can't get to sleep for 20 to 30 minutes, get up and go to a quiet room and try a non-stimulating activity, such as light reading. Go back to bed when you feel sleepy.

I'm a shift worker, how can I improve my sleep?

The tips below might also be useful if you work shifts:

- Avoid caffeinated drinks during the last few hours of your shift.
- Use eye masks and ear plugs when trying to sleep.
- Let people know what hours you're working and when you will be sleeping, so they know when to leave you alone.
- Go home and sleep as soon as your shift finishes.

Other useful services*

- NHS Inform
www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/insomnia
- Insomnia Helpline Advisory Service
☎ 020 8994 9874 (6pm to 8pm weekdays)
(run by www.medicaladvisoryservice.org.uk)
- Age UK
www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/insomnia

Contact us

Department of Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
Foresterhill Road
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☎ 01224 553730

✉ nhsg.chronicpainnurses@nhs.net

We aim to respond to emails or voicemails within 5 working days.

Please note: Nurses **do not** have access to appointment bookings and waiting lists; for these types of queries please contact:

☎ 01224 550840

Comments and feedback about our service

We want to provide an efficient and effective service. You can help us by giving us suggestions for improvement and telling us when you are dissatisfied with the service. Feedback cards are widely available.

You can also share your story anonymously at **www.careopinion.org** or call them on **0800 122 31 35**.

	 <p>Scan me to go to Care Opinion's website</p>
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This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1735.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.