

# Sleep hygiene: Patient information leaflet

## Things to consider that can help and improve your quality of sleep and reduces anxiety.

- **How much caffeine do you take?** Remember that caffeine is a stimulant which is alerting and will affect your sleep quality and any anxiety. Common products that contain caffeine are tea, coffee, Irn-Bru®, cola, Red Bull®, Pro Plus® tablets and some energy drinks. Some pain medicines also contain caffeine: Solpadeine®, Propain®, Panadol Plus®, Veganin® etc. Therefore, try to avoid all caffeine containing products after 6pm in the evening.
- **Alcohol** will affect the quality of your sleep, which may add to problems of anxiety and depression.
- Other things that affect sleep
  - Watching television stimulates your brain with sound, light and motion. All of these stimulate your body and reduce fatigue.
  - Watching television in your bedroom. This can affect sleep quality as your body gets out of the habit of being trained to go to bed to sleep. Therefore, remove TV from bedroom.
  - Noisy neighbours – difficult to deal with but ear plugs may help.
- How to improve sleep
  - **Establish a routine** Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.
  - **No naps** Try not to sleep during the day.
  - **Unwind the mind** May help writing down problems and filing them away until the next morning. Address problems the next day, e.g. money/family problems.
  - **Take regular exercise** such as a brisk 20 minute walk. Natural chemicals (endorphins) produced during exercise have a calming and relaxing affect after you have exercised. Do not exercise before going to bed or for three hours before going to bed as this can have the opposite effect.
  - **Hot caffeine free drinks** will warm you and help your body relax.
  - **Make time to relax** Quiet time reflecting, listening to calming music such as classical, transient house, etc. 20-30 minutes a day would be enough. Watching TV does not help as it can be over stimulating.
  - **Consider using ear plugs** for noise that is affecting you which you cannot control.
  - **If all else fails get out of bed** and do something (read, etc) and then go back to bed.

## Other information:

- NHS Inform: [Sleep problems and insomnia self-help guide](#)
- NHS How to get to sleep: [Sleep and tiredness](#)
- The Sleep Charity: [Information for adults](#)
- The Sleep Charity: [Teen Sleep Hub](#)