



Lines open Mon - Fri 10am - 6pm

0808 801 0338

Free to call from all landlines and mobiles

Sleep

Sleep is a chance for your body to rest and repair itself. Most people need about 7 or 8 hours a night with younger people needing more and older people less. The occasional bad night's sleep will not harm you, but if you have very poor sleep for several nights in a row, you'll feel very tired. You may find it hard to concentrate and make decisions and you could even start to feel depressed.

And, of course, worrying about not sleeping is not a good recipe for a peaceful night!

The way we sleep does change. For instance, when your body is going through changes e.g. puberty or pregnancy, it will need more sleep and rest. At times of stress, it can be hard to sleep at all, often when you most need it.

Why can't I sleep?

If you are having a problem sleeping, one or more of these may be the cause....

- Eating too much late at night
- Room too hot or cold
- Uncomfortable bed/bedding
- Drugs/pills
- Partner keeps you awake or wakens you
- Worry
- Illness
- Too much caffeine/too many cigarettes
- Not enough exercise
- Having no routine

What can I do about it?

It's all about identifying what's stopping you sleeping and taking action on it.

Routine

Try to establish regular times for getting up and going to bed that fit in with your life and doesn't differ wildly from day to day or week to week. Some exercise, even just a walk, in late afternoon or early evening will help. Try not to sleep during the day but, if you have to, a short nap after lunch is best.



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Practicalities

Make sure your bed is as comfortable as it can be. Try a duvet/blanket underneath if it is too hard, more/fewer pillows, more/fewer nightclothes etc. Also use these if you can't regulate the heating. If noise and light are the problem try using a mask and ear plugs.

Unfortunately, if your partner is the problem, the only solution is to spend time sleeping apart!

Food & drink

Don't have caffeine after mid-afternoon and keep late-night eating or drinking to a minimum. Ironically, alcohol can make some people feel sleepy, but you don't get a good night's rest and feel crap in the morning.

Try relaxing with a warm milky drink before bed.

Worried?

Try to give yourself time to relax and wind down before you go to bed. If you feel your worries are getting out of control it may help to talk to someone. There are lots of people and services to choose from. You can download the Stress or Anxiety factsheets here or contact InfoLine (0808 801 0338).

More information

- The Sleep Council
www.sleepcouncil.com/
- The BBC Sleep Pages
www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/sleep/
- British Snoring & Sleep Apnoea Association
www.britishsnoring.co.uk

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