

# Health & Wellbeing

## July – Sleep easy



### *How much sleep do we actually need?*

Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep a day. This stays the same even in old age.

### *Tips for a good night's sleep*

#### *– Have a regular sleep pattern*

Try to go to bed at the same time every evening and get up at the same time every morning. This will help your body to work out a healthy sleep routine.

#### *– Turn off technology*

Television, computers and other distractions can interfere with your sleep. Your mind needs to be in the habit of knowing that you are in bed, you are there to sleep.

#### *– Wind down and relax before going to bed*

Exercise is fine, but not too late in the evening. Find a relaxation technique that works for you.

#### *– Make sure your bedroom is comfortable*

You should have a quiet, dark room with comfortable bedding and good temperature control.

#### *– Don't lie awake watching the clock*

Watching the time on a clock just makes you anxious about not being asleep. If possible take the clock out of your bedroom. If you need the clock for the alarm, turn it around so you cannot see the time.

#### *– Avoid daytime naps*

Sleeping during the day will make it difficult to sleep well at night. If a nap is absolutely necessary, for example because of a late night, then limit this to about thirty minutes. Make sure you are awake for at least 4 hours before going back to bed.

– *You may need professional help*

If you are still having trouble sleeping, if you have persistent problems with mood, restlessness in bed, severe snoring or waking up unrefreshed despite what should be adequate length sleep, make sure that you go and see your doctor.



*Things you should know about:*

## **SHIFTWORK**

- People who work shifts often don't sleep as well as those who work set hours during the day.
- During night time work, it may be more difficult to concentrate and make decisions.
- Having enough sleep is important for safe driving.
- Twenty-four hours without sleep is as dangerous as driving with 0.08 blood alcohol content.
- A short nap (15 minutes) will boost energy and concentration.
- Keeping to the same schedule is better for the body clock than changing work shifts.
- It is best to go to bed at the same time each day whenever possible.

### ***But I'm a shift worker, so what can I do about it?***

- Make time for enough sleep. Shiftworkers have to sleep when others are awake. Social and sporting events can sometimes be rearranged so that shiftworkers can still participate in these activities.
- Try to sleep in peace! Others in the house need to respect the need of the shiftworker to sleep. This may mean removing the telephone from the bedroom. Some shiftworkers find that wearing ear plugs to bed helps.
- Keep the bedroom cool and dark.
- Avoid caffeine, sleeping pills, alcohol or cigarettes before going to bed.
- If you can, sleep just before going to work. This is better than earlier in the day. If this is not possible, taking a nap before going to work may help.
- If you are allowed to take a break during your shift, if need be, this time can be used for a short nap.