

Better Sleep

Some people just don't sleep well and some don't when the daylight savings change over happens. Sleep is very important so how can we improve it?

Why is Sleep Important?

- Sleep is essential to rest the body and mind. Also, our body carries out important functions like healing and growing while we sleep.
- If we don't get enough sleep we may have a lack of concentration, problems with digestion, poor immunity, headaches, irritability and increased pain.

How Much Sleep Do You Need?

- The amount of sleep you need depends on our age. School age children need 9-11 hours, teenagers need 8-10 hours and adults need 7-9 hours.

How Can You Set Up our Bedroom to Improve Sleep?

- Having good curtains or blinds that block out light is important. Street lighting or a bright moon can disturbing you during the night.
- Don't overlook light coming in the bedroom door – many modern houses have glassed front door which let in a surprising amount of street lighting. You may need to close the bedroom door to block it out.
- Have a lower temperature in your bed room – we sleep better when cooler.
- Have “yellow” light in your bedroom – this is more calming and promotes sleep.

What About a Bedtime Routine

- A regular bedtime routine can “prime” your body for sleep.
- Take a hot shower 90 minutes before bed – this can help to relax muscles but also ensures you are cool again when you get into bed.
- An hour before bed:
 - Switch off “blue light” devices such as tablets, mobile phones and television.
 - Avoid doing things that are going to make you mentally alert such as study, crossword puzzles or writing emails.
 - Do something relaxing – read, listen to quiet music, do a jigsaw puzzle, meditate.

What Food or Drink Can assist Sleep?

- Being hydrated is important for good sleep. If you haven't drunk much water during the day, drink extra at night before going to bed.
- Calcium is known to assist sleep so calcium rich food such as leafy greens or dairy can help sleep – the old wife's tale of hot milk to assist sleep has some truth!
- Melatonin is a chemical released by the body to assist sleep – foods that assist the production of melatonin include bananas and tart cherry juice.
- There is some evidence that having a lack of magnesium not only causes cramps but also stops good quality sleep. Whole grains such as barley are rich in magnesium.
- A cup of tea can also help – especially if it's camomile or green tea!
- It is important to finish eating a few hours before going to bed.
- Limit or avoid stimulants such alcohol, smoking and caffeine for 2-3 hours before bed.

What Else can Help?

Massage to help relax or acupuncture can help some sleep issues.