

Where can I get further help?

If you feel your sleeping problems are getting worse and affecting your life, make an appointment to see your GP or take a look at the Trust's website to see what services we offer and contact details. If you cannot get online please contact our Customer Services team on 0800 587 2108 for more details

Website – www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk

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Booklets available in this series:

- Anger – How do I manage it
- Baby Blues – How can I best deal with them?
- Bereavement – How can I cope?
- Confidence – How can I get some?
- Healthy Living – What should I do?
- Healthy Sex – How can I be sure?
- Low Moods – How can I feel better?
- My body, my health. Check it out!
- Pain – What can I do to help myself?
- Self Harm – How can I help myself?
- Shyness – How can I manage it?
- Stress – How do I manage it?
- The end of life – How can I prepare for it?
- Worries – How can I best deal with them?

Your feedback is welcome

We invite you to share any comments, compliments, concerns or complaints you have about the Trust. Please speak to a member of staff or contact our customers services team on 0800 587 2108, who can also provide help in understanding this information, including in other formats.



Sleep
How do I get some?



I lay in bed, tossing and turning all night and just can't get to sleep.



Sound familiar?

We can all have a bad night's sleep every now and again. Missing a few hours of sleep is not harmful as your body catches up when it can. Sleeping becomes a problem when you regularly struggle to sleep and it starts to affect you and your life.

This booklet offers information to help you sleep better, but it is not intended as a direct substitute for a conversation with a healthcare professional, such as your GP.

The main types of sleep problems are:

1. Getting to sleep.
2. Staying asleep.
3. Very light sleep in which you wake up regularly during the night.
4. Waking up too early.

The amount of sleep we need depends on a number of factors such as age, lifestyle, diet and environment. On average, newborn babies need 16 hours of sleep a day, children need 10 and adults need around 7 to 9.

Step one: Think about your sleeping habits

Keep a 'sleep diary' for two weeks. You can make notes on the pages at the end of this booklet, either for yourself or to share with someone. Make sure you include:

- The times you have eaten during the day.
- Your caffeine and alcohol intake.
- Exercise you have done.
- Stress you have felt during the day.
- Any daytime naps you have had.
- How long it takes you to get to sleep.
- The times you wake up during the night.
- If you have had a cigarette right before you go to bed.

Use this diary to think about where you can make changes to your lifestyle.



I often wake up for no reason and then struggle to get back off.



Step two: Do something

Go to bed and get up at the same time

Set an alarm to wake you up at the same time each morning. It is important that you stick to this time seven days a week, even on a Sunday. Getting into a routine will help you sleep better at night.

Also, no matter how tired you are don't take a nap during the day. Try to distract yourself by getting a drink of juice or going for a walk if you can.

Breathe

When trying to sleep, concentrate on breathing slowly. This will relax you and make you feel calmer and more tired. Relaxing techniques to try:

- Close your eyes and imagine you're in a positive place.
- Say the word 'in' when you breathe in and the word 'out' when you breathe out to get you into a rhythm.
- Relax your muscles.
- Keep your concentration on your surroundings of the 'here and now'.
- Stay calm and don't rush

I'm such a light sleeper; the slightest thing will wake me up.

I go to sleep but then wake up really early and just lie there for hours.

Health

Keep yourself healthy. Don't eat a big meal just before bed, but try not to go to bed hungry. Instead have small, healthy snacks such as fruit.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol or smoking for at least four hours before bed. These may help you fall asleep at first but will wake you up when the effects have worn off.

Why not read the "Healthy living – What should I do?" booklet available on our website for more information.

Exercise is a great way to bring down stress levels, help improve wellbeing and make you physically tired. It doesn't have to be difficult - try stretching, walking or swimming. However, don't exercise within two hours of bed time as your body needs time to get back to its resting state.

Bedtime habits to try

- Create a relaxing bedtime routine.
- If you can't help worrying about things before bed try writing these down and coming back to them in the morning. There is space for writing at the end of this booklet if you need it.
- Check all medicines you are taking to ensure they are not affecting your sleep.
- Remember that everyone is different and we all need different amounts of sleep throughout life.

Bedtime habits to avoid

- Looking at the clock.
- Worrying about falling asleep when lying in bed. Try to do something to ease the worry, such as reading a book.
- Drinking a lot of caffeine in general, but especially around bed time.

Improve your bedroom environment

- Use blackout blinds or wear an eye mask if the early morning sunlight or bright streetlamps affect your sleep.
- Wear ear plugs if noise is a problem.
- Use your bed for sleep, and avoid using it for things such as using your mobile phone or watching television.
- Make sure you have a comfortable bed.
- Ensure your room is at a comfortable temperature.



Shift work

Coping with working in shifts can change from person to person depending on their lifestyle, age and fitness. Here are some tips to help you stay awake and alert at work:

- Have a relaxing journey to and from work – either take your time getting there or consider public transport.
- Be active during breaks – try going for a walk if possible.
- Think about your caffeine intake as this will provide a short burst of energy and might affect you later on in your shift.
- Keep healthy – try to do 30 minutes of physical activity a day and eat balanced meals.
- Do the most active tasks when you are feeling most tired through your shift.
- Use blackout blinds to recreate a night environment when trying to sleep during the day.

Step three: Talk to a healthcare professional

If you feel your sleeping problems are getting worse and affecting your life, make an appointment to see your GP or health professional.

“ “ *The lack of sleep is making me stressed and irritable.* ” ”

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