

# Sleep

Information for residents, families and carers



Sleep is very important for good health.

Not getting enough sleep affects your health. It may also affect how well you can do day-to-day tasks.

Sleep patterns change as you age. Getting a good night's sleep can be harder when you're older.

Some medical conditions affect your sleep, and some sleep disorders are more common with age.

There are many ways you can improve your sleep without taking medicine.

## Signs you may have a sleep problem

- You are not able to get to sleep.
- You are not able to stay asleep.
- Waking up early and not being able to get back to sleep.
- Feeling sleepy during the day.

## Ways you can sleep better

- Do more exercise and activities during the day. This doesn't have to be a class or group. Walking and doing ordinary things count.
- Let staff know if pain, trouble with your breathing or other health problems keep you awake.
- Try and get up at the same time every day. This helps to set your body clock.
- Turn the lights on in your room in the morning, or get some morning sunshine if you can.
- Nap before 3.00 pm and not for longer than 45 minutes. Later or longer naps may lead to a restless sleep at night.
- Ask your doctor or staff to check if any of the medicines you are taking could be disturbing your sleep.
- Avoid tea and coffee, smoking or drinking alcohol, or eating a heavy meal for a few hours before going to bed.

- Make sure you are relaxed before bed. Turn off the TV and computers at least 15–30 minutes before going to bed.
- Talk about things that are worrying you to family, friends, staff or your doctor.
- Spend less time in your bedroom – keep it as a place for sleep and intimacy.
- Your room should be dark and quiet at night. It should not be too hot or too cold.
- Tell staff if you are being woken by them or by other residents.
- Work together and plan how you can have a better night's sleep.

If none of these tips help, tell your doctor. Your doctor may send you to a psychologist or sleep expert.

Sometimes your doctor might consider giving you medicine to help you sleep. Only use this for a short time. Your body gets used to the medicine quickly, and it loses its effect.

## Working together

You and your family are important members of the care team. You know what your normal sleep pattern is.

Let staff know if you are having trouble sleeping. Tell them how well you slept in the past. Don't wait to see if you get better – it's always best to get help early.

Working together with staff will help to keep you healthy. Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care.

## Questions to ask staff

- Could my medicines be causing my sleep problems?



## Want to know more?

Sleep hygiene <[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)>

Ageing and sleep <[www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au)>

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