

### Things to try:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day
- Have a soothing routine before going to bed e.g. reading something for 15 minutes
- Exercise regularly
- Spend time outdoors
- Create a temperature of approximately 18°C in your bedroom
- Write down any distracting thoughts before going to bed
- Use a pillow to raise your head as this reduces snoring or sleep apnoea
- Reassess the medications you take, some can make it more difficult for you to sleep
- Consider taking herbs e.g. valerian or hops
- Ensure your bedroom is a restful environment e.g. use calming colours
- Find your favourite sleeping position
- Have a light snack and a hot milk before bedtime
- Take a hot bath/shower about 1 ½ hours before bedtime
- Vacuum, ventilate and turn your mattress regularly and renew it every 10 years
- Practice relaxation techniques (e.g. mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation)
- Consider psychological therapies e.g. stimulus control therapy, cognitive therapy

Our team of Clinical and Counselling psychologists provides services to address the psychological and mental health needs of children, adults and families.

We are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the British Psychology Society (BPS) and are a registered provider to BUPA. We have professional and public liability insurance cover and enhanced DBS checks.

For more information about Shrewsbury Psychology Centre and the work we do please contact us:

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## Sleep and sleep difficulties

*'Sleep is the golden chain that binds health and our bodies together.'*



## Information Leaflet

# The Importance of Sleep

## What is sleep?

*'A condition of body and mind which typically recurs for several hours every night, in which the nervous system is inactive, the eyes closed, the postural muscles relaxed, and consciousness practically suspended.'*

## The importance of sleep

Sleep is important as it helps us to stay mentally and physically healthy. As we sleep we give our bodies' the chance to rest; during sleep our breathing becomes slower, our heart rate decreases and our metabolism slows down to conserve energy for the next day. Sleep also gives our body the chance to restore itself; muscle growth, tissue repair, protein synthesis, and growth hormone release occur mostly, or in some cases, only during sleep. Furthermore, sleep is shown to be associated with an intact immune system. But sleep serves another really important function and that is to consolidate what we have learned during the day.

*Did you know that you spend 1/3 of your life asleep?*

# How much sleep should you get?

## Sleep requirements

The NHS recommends that adults and older adults should get **6-9 hours** of sleep each night in order to stay healthy. However, according to the Sleep Council (2013) most of us don't get enough sleep. 70% of us get less than 7 hours sleep and 40% even less than 6 hours sleep each night.

## Factors that affect sleep

- Life events e.g. moving houses, retirement
- Shift work
- Stress
- Illnesses/ disorders e.g. Depression, Bipolar, Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Dementia, Insomnia, Sleep apnoea
- Pain
- Medications
- Alcohol, drugs, caffeine

## Consequences of poor sleep

- Lack of energy
- Cognitive impairments
- Irritability
- Hallucinations
- Impaired immune system
- Weight gain
- Increased risk of Diabetes Type 2

# Tips to improve your sleep

## Sleep Hygiene

Getting enough good quality sleep is important for good health; however, most of us do not get the recommended amount of sleep each night due to numerous reasons. So what can you do to improve your sleep?



## Things to avoid:

- Avoid sleeping tablets and over the counter medication (they have side effects and only help in the short run)
- Avoid doing other activities than sleeping in your bedroom
- Avoid taking naps during the day, If you do nap, limit it to 1 hour before 3p.m.
- Don't watch television before going to bed
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and smoking before bed
- Avoid having your pets in bed
- Avoid spicy food
- Avoid looking at the clock when falling asleep or waking up during the night