

Insomnia

- Insomnia, or difficulty sleeping on a regular basis is very common. It can also be very difficult to cope with and can affect all aspects of life.
- Insomnia usually gets better by changing your sleeping habits. This is *much* more important than medication given to help with sleep. Medication does not help the underlying problem and does not give you proper sleep. Sometimes a special form of counselling for insomnia is advised.
- Sometimes insomnia is due to **stress, anxiety or feeling very sad and hopeless** (depression). Please talk to your clinician if you think this is a problem for you.

There may be specific advice that you will be given based on your situation, or on review of a sleep diary. However, here is some general advice to help with insomnia. If these measures are not working or if things are getting worse, please return for a review.

General advice for better sleep:

DO

- ✓ Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- ✓ Relax for at least an hour before bed
- ✓ Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet – use curtains, an eye mask or ear plugs if needed
- ✓ Make sure your mattress, pillows and covers are comfortable
- ✓ Exercise regularly during the daytime
- ✓ Use anxiety management or relaxation techniques such as slow, deep breathing
- ✓ Try and postpone night-time worries until the morning – write the worry down on paper and tell yourself that you will deal with it in the morning
- ✓ Pray that God would help you entrust your worries to him. And whether sleep comes or not, try to dwell on his promises rather than to think about problems.

DON'T

- ✗ Avoid daytime naps or 'lie-ins' if you've had a bad night's sleep
- ✗ Avoid working in your bedroom
- ✗ Do not watch TV or use a computer, phone or tablet in bed or just before going to bed as the bright light makes you more awake
- ✗ Avoid tea, coffee, cigarettes and alcohol in the 6 hours before bed
- ✗ Do not eat a big meal late at night
- ✗ Do not exercise in the 4 hours before bed
- ✗ Keep realistic expectations about sleep; recognise that you can cope even after broken sleep
- ✗ Don't lie in bed awake for long periods – get up if still awake after 20 minutes, do something calming and then try again
- ✗ Do not drive when you feel sleepy

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from?" When we open our eyes in the middle of the night, we might ask the same question. Where does our help come from in the darkest hours of the night? "[Our] help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:1-2).

God understands our worries, our weariness, our frustration. He can sympathise with our sleeplessness.

God shows us his love and care through the day. He can use our weariness to push us to lean on him as the all-sufficient, all-wise, and all-powerful God, and to know that when we are weak with sleeplessness, then we are strong in him. (2 Corinthians 12:9).