



## GENERAL SLEEP TIPS – PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Nearly everybody at some point in their life, goes through a stage of sleeping difficulty. It is important to note that each individual has their own sleep needs and each individual will have their own sleep routines. What works for one person may not work for the next person. The following information sheet is designed to help you find what your needs are and to provide some guidelines on how to improve your sleep.

### SLEEP PATTERNS

**TIP 1** – Work out whether you are a ‘night owl’ or a ‘lark’. Some people prefer to stay up late, others prefer to get up early. Once you determine this it will allow you to work out when suits you best to sleep.

**TIP 2** – Work out how much sleep you actually need. While there are guidelines out here suggesting we need 8 hrs per night etc., it is important to realise this is a guideline. Some people require more and some people require less. A great way to determine this is to keep a sleep diary recording how much sleep you had and how you felt during the following day.

**TIP 3** – To set your body clock, the best method is to set yourself a consistent wake up time... **AND STICK TO IT EVERY DAY INCLUDING WEEKENDS AND DAYS OFF.** This may cause some discomfort in the short term, but it is a great method for setting a good sleep routine.

**TIP 4** – Get exposure to sunlight first thing in the morning when you wake up. Exposure to sunlight, especially in the morning helps with the production of melatonin which is the chemical in charge of sleep regulation. Limiting exposure to sunlight later in the day is also helpful.

### BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS

**TIP 1** – Being too hot is a very common cause of sleep issues. Ensure you are a comfortable temperature. Sleeping in layers is a good idea. Also avoid intense exercise in the few hours before bed. This will increase your core body temperature which takes a long time to reduce. To get into a certain stage of sleep (REM) and stay in it, our bodies need to drop.

**TIP 2** – Spend less time in bed. If you find it hard to get to sleep at the start of the night: Go to bed later (while maintaining the same get up time). This will increase the demand for sleep in future nights. By increasing sleep demand, you will become more tired, which in turn, may allow you to get to sleep earlier in the future.

**TIP 3** – Determine the things that stimulate you before bed, then change what part of the day you do these things. Whether its eating, drinking coffee, having sex, taking medications (consult your GP), drinking water, watching TV etc., one needs to determine how these behaviours effect your sleep.

**TIP 4** – If you are a poor sleeper, stop trying to make the Sleep Olympic team. As mentioned previous, some people just don’t require 8 hrs sleep. If you cannot sleep for 8 hrs, accept this. It is often the anxiety of thinking you have not slept enough that causes issues with sleep.

For more information consult your GP or visit [www.sleepright.com.au](http://www.sleepright.com.au).