



## The importance of sleep

### Getting quality sleep

Getting the right amount of quality sleep can give you more energy, improve concentration, make you less likely to crave snacks that aren't nutritious, and you guessed it, keep a healthy headspace. If you're having a tough time, sleeping can be one of the first things that's affected. Have you noticed when you get good quality sleep it's often easier to manage your emotions? This can help you deal with any stress, including relationships, and work and study difficulties. It can also help reduce the risk of mental health challenges in the future.



### So how much is enough?

Keep in mind that different people need slightly different amounts of sleep. You might not know how much sleep you get, so it can be a good idea to record it in a sleep app or journal and notice whether your sleep impacts things like your mood and energy levels, or anything else you might notice.



### Why it might be difficult to get a good night's sleep

We all experience poor sleep from time to time – work stress, relationship concerns, money problems can keep us up worrying. It's common to find it hard to get good quality sleep. It can be impacted by many things like the food you eat, using alcohol or other drugs, feeling worried or anxious, and even having screen time (computer, phone) before bed. The good news is there are things you can do to help you get those quality zzz's.

### So how can we get better sleep?

Changing habits can be hard, be kind to yourself while you're trying new things. You don't have to do everything at once, set yourself a small goal, choose something that's easier for you to do, then add other things in later.

- At least an hour before bed, turn off games, YouTube, social media and any notifications. Try a movie, book or watch TV instead (not in the bedroom though!).
- Use the blue light filter on your phone and lower the brightness at night.
- If you find it hard to wind down, try a mindfulness exercise; you might try a mindfulness app.
- Try to sleep the same amount every night. An extra hour, every now and then, is fine – any more can confuse your body clock. Falling asleep one hour earlier is better than sleeping in one hour later.
- If you need to get up during the night, try to avoid turning on bright lights and hop back into bed quickly.
- Avoid caffeine at least 4-6 hours before you go to bed.
- Limit the use of alcohol and other drugs.
- If you can, avoid napping during the day.
- Leave your devices outside your bedroom

For many people, quality sleep can be hard to get, so don't be too tough on yourself as you try different things. You'll get there... you're learning. Be kind to yourself. The importance of sleep to individuals' health and wellbeing is increasingly being recognised and understood. Optimal sleep is associated with good quality of life and both physical and mental wellbeing.