

## Sleep

**The most important point to remember when trying to get to sleep is not to try too hard. Worrying about sleep is much more tiring than just being awake.**

### Before bed:

- Establish a regular routine each night. This helps to 'cue' you to sleep.
- Eating and drinking for the last few hours before bed is likely to stimulate your body so try to do these things earlier in the evening.
- Read or watch television outside the bedroom, the bedroom should be associated with sleep.
- Try not to watch scary movies, these increase your adrenaline and stimulate wakefulness. Comedies are good as endorphins will be released which can help you to relax.
- Set your alarm each night and aim to get up at the same time each morning irrespective of how much sleep you had during the night.
- Taking a warm bath and/or having a massage are good for inducing sleep.
- Avoid vigorous exercise prior to bed (apart from sex, which can help you to relax). Yoga and stretching are good non-aerobic forms of exercise.

### Once in bed:

- Try to turn your mind away from the days' activities, any worries you may have or what you will do in the future. This is not the best time to think of these things. Think about pleasant places or events or use your imagination to conjure up relaxing images.
- If you find that you are unable to sleep whilst in bed, perform your relaxation routine as good relaxation is just as restful as good sleep.
- If you cannot get to sleep, GET UP after 20 minutes and go and do something boring and relaxing to allow your body to feel sleepy again. Have some boring books or videos on hand.
- The environment in which you sleep is important. Try and ensure your bedroom is quiet, well-ventilated, dark and a comfortable temperature.
- Even if you did not sleep well, try and get up at the usual time. If your sleep hours vary too much it will become harder to get to sleep the next night. This is very similar to the effects of jet-lag.