FACT SHEET:



Category: Life After ABI

Audience: Person with an ABI

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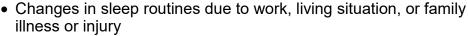
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Getting a Good Nights Sleep After Brain Injury

Introduction

Sleep patterns can change for many reasons:



- Changes in your physical health and well-being
- Stress and worry

Good sleep patterns are important so that you have enough energy for all your daily activities (work, home, driving, having a social life). Lack of sleep can affect alertness, concentration and mood.

Strategies to improve the quality of your sleep:

1. Get into a good sleep routine

- Go to bed only when you feel sleepy at night-time.
- Try to get to sleep at about the same time every day.
- No matter how poor your sleep at night, get up at the same time every day use an alarm clock.
- Don't oversleep because of a poor night's sleep.

2. Sleep only at night time

- Sleep during the day will affect your sleep at night so try to avoid naps during the day.
- Early on after an injury, people may find they need to have daytime rest or sleep to manage fatigue, but try to keep the naps short and don't nap after mid afternoon
- If you get tired try to just have a rest on the couch. Don't rest on your bed.

3. Wind down before bedtime

- Don't watch exciting movies just before bedtime.
 - Do some relaxation exercises
 - Try a relaxation tape
 - Listen to some relaxing music

- Start preparing for bed at least 30 minutes before bed e.g. lock the house, have a shower, put on pyjamas, brush your teeth, turn down the lights.
- Try a warm drink e.g. milk

4. Spend time in bed sleeping

- Don't do other activities in bed e.g. reading, watching television, or eating.
- · Keep the bed only for sleeping.

If you are awake for a long time:

- · Get out of bed.
- Do an activity until you are sleepy (make sure it is something boring).
- Go back to bed repeat above if needed.

5. Caffeine

- Avoid caffeine after lunch as this may affect your sleep at night-time.
- Caffeine is in coffee, tea, chocolate or cola drinks so be sure to cut down on all of them.
- Try decaffeinated tea or coffee as an alternative

6. Alcohol, drugs, and medication

- Avoid drinking alcohol, especially at night time. Alcohol changes the kind of sleep you have, and can make sleep restless.
- If you smoke cigarettes, nicotine levels may also affect your sleep so try to cut down.
- Some prescription and recreational drugs can change your sleep patterns, so ask for information from your Pharmacist or GP.
- Over the counter medications (e.g. pseudoephedrine) can also change your sleep patterns, so ask your Pharmacist or GP for information about all the medications you are taking.

7. Exercise

- Get some gentle, regular exercise because this will help with your sleep.
- Don't overdo it if you haven't been getting exercise for a while. Start slowly.
- Avoid exercising at least four hours before bed-time.

 Talk to your doctor or a Physiotherapist about the kind of exercise you can do.

8. Time outside

- Spend some time in the sunshine during the day, because this may help with your sleep patterns e.g.
- -Sit outside with a book or magazine or the newspaper (remember sunscreen and a hat).
- -Go for a short walk
- -Do an activity outside in the fresh air e.g. gardening, walking the dog, hanging the washing, getting the mail

9. Sleep Environment

- Make your bedroom and bed as comfortable and pleasant as possible.
- Remove clutter
- Get rid of any noise or distractions e.g. use ear-plugs to cut down on noise.
- Use curtains to block out light and noise and dim the lights.
- Make sure your pillow and bed are comfortable.
- Make sure the bedroom is the right temperature for the weather.
- Essential oils like lavender also can be relaxing, so a couple of drops in your bath water, or on your pillow may help create a relaxing feeling.

10. Be patient.

- It can take time to re-settle sleep patterns so don't expect changes to happen over-night.
- Keep using the new ideas and you should start to see changes gradually.
- If you need further advice, talk to your GP or a Psychologist.

Resources

See other Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS) Information sheets at http://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/