



Wellbeing Bulletin: Sleep Edition part (ii)



In addition to the advice on the previous bulletin, here are some steps that can promote better sleep during the coronavirus pandemic. If these efforts don't pay off immediately, don't give up. It can take time to stabilise your sleep, and you may find that you need to adapt these suggestions to best fit your specific situation.

1. Set Your Schedule and Routine: Establishing a routine makes it easier for your mind and body to get used to a consistent sleep schedule. It takes time to get back into a good routine but setting an alarm to get up in time for lesson 1 will help, and as the week goes on you will begin to feel more tired and ready to go to bed at a sensible time.

2. Reserve Your Bed For Sleep: Sleep experts emphasize the importance of creating an association in your mind between your bed and sleep. Ideally, this means that working-from-home shouldn't be working-from-bed. It also means avoiding bringing a laptop into bed to watch a movie or series. Frequently changing your sheets and making your bed can help promote good sleep hygiene, too.

3. Frustrated? On any given night, if you find that you're having a hard time sleeping, don't spend more than 20 minutes tossing and turning. Instead, get out of bed and do something relaxing in very low light, and then head back to bed to try to fall asleep.

4. See the Light: Exposure to light plays a crucial role in helping our bodies regulate sleep in a healthy way. If you can, spend some time outside in natural light. Even if the sun isn't shining brightly, natural light still has positive effects on circadian rhythm. Use your lunch hour as an opportunity to get out and get some fresh air. As much as possible, open windows and blinds to let light into your home during the day.

5. Screen Time: The blue light produced by mobile phones, tablets, and computers, has been found to interfere with the body's natural sleep-promoting processes. Avoid using these devices for at least an hour before bed and cut down the total time that you spend scrolling on social media.

There are several apps you can use to monitor your time on social media sites or apps each day. You can also use device settings or special apps that reduce or filter blue light.

6. Stay Active: Regular daily activity has numerous important benefits, including for sleep. If you can go for a walk while maintaining a safe distance from other people, that's a great option. If not, there is a wealth of resources online for all types and levels of exercise.

7. Be Kind to Yourself: It might not seem critical to your sleep, but self-care can reduce stress and its harmful effects on mood and sleep. While the situation can feel overwhelming, try to find time for yourself where you can just do something positive for yourself.

8. Relaxation: Finding ways to relax can be a potent tool to improve your sleep. Deep breathing, stretching, yoga, mindfulness meditation, calming music, and quiet reading are just a few examples of relaxation techniques that you can build into your routines.

9. Watch What You Eat and Drink: Keeping a healthy diet can promote good sleep. During times of heightened stress and uncertainty, it can be easy to reach for fatty or sugary foods, or for happy hour to start bleeding into earlier parts of the day. Be cautious with the intake of caffeine, as this can disrupt the quantity and quality of your sleep.

10. Contact Your Doctor if Necessary: If you have severe or worsening sleep or other health problems, it is advisable to be in touch with your doctor. Many doctors are increasing availability of online appointments which can be done in the comfort of your own homes.