



# Sleep and fatigue

## Understand the facts

Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep a night. As we get older, it becomes a little harder to fall asleep and stay asleep. A lack of restful sleep can lead to fatigue and increase the risk for a number of chronic health problems. Poor sleep has been linked to significant problems, including: greater risk of depression and anxiety disorders, increased risk of heart disease and cancer, impaired memory, reduced immune system functioning, weight gain and greater likelihood of accidents.

## Assess

- Am I often tired?
- Am I using caffeine to get through the day?
- Do I need to use alcohol or drugs to get to sleep?
- Do I sleep well?



## Assess (continued)

- Do I wake up feeling refreshed?
- Do I get drowsy while driving or watching TV?
- Do I have a sleep disorder?
- Do I get irritable or angry easily?
- Do I always see the negative in a situation?
- Has my relationship with others been impacted due to constant tiredness?



## Self-care

- Set a regular bedtime – your body craves consistency.
- De-caffeinate yourself – starting six to eight hours before bed.
- De-stress yourself – relax by taking a warm bath, meditating, etc.
- Exercise – working out relieves muscle tension. Do not work out right before bed.
- Make your bed a sleep haven – it is not a place to work.
- Avoid looking at the screen on your phone, iPad and TV at least one hour before bedtime.
- Avoid using alcohol as a sleep aid, or combining it with medications.
- Take advice from your doctor on how long sleep medication is needed.



## Reach out

- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for free, confidential counseling services.
- Consult with your physician and discuss referral to a sleep medicine specialist.



## Need more information?

- Sleep Health Foundation:  
[www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/public-information/fact-sheets-a-z.html](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/public-information/fact-sheets-a-z.html).
- Harvard Medical School:  
[Sleep](#) and [Improving Sleep: A guide to a good night's rest](#).
- Mental Health America:  
[www.mentalhealthamerica.net/get-enough-sleep](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/get-enough-sleep).
- National Alliance on Mental Illness:  
[www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Related-Conditions/Sleep-Disorders](http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Related-Conditions/Sleep-Disorders).