

This leaflet explains about how chronic fatigue syndrome affects your sleeping and provides suggestions for improving how well you sleep. If you have any questions, please call us.

Our telephone number is 020 7813 8541.



Chronic fatigue syndrome and sleep

Information for young people

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust

CFS/ME, sleep and young people

Young people usually have erratic sleeping and waking times. Young people need a lot of sleep; about nine hours each night is normal.

Sleeping and waking times are even more erratic for young people with CFS/ME. Regardless of the number of hours spent in bed, you can still wake up feeling tired if you are having 'un-refreshing sleep'.

There are two types of sleep: **non-rapid eye movement sleep** and **rapid eye movement (REM) sleep**. During the night, you move between each category.

Advantages to sleeping better

- You're awake when everyone else is – you will have more time to see friends or have a social life, go to school and be part of the family
- You're awake for meal times. Your body can't produce energy to keep you going through the day if you're not eating well.
- You will have less fatigue when you have better quality sleep



How to help yourself sleep better

You're more likely to fall asleep if you're feeling calm and there are no distractions in your bedroom. The following suggestions may be useful:

- A quiet period before bedtime may help you get to sleep more easily
- Go to bed at the same time each night
- Use the bed and bedroom just for sleeping
- Remove the TV from the bedroom
- Turn your clock around so it is facing away from the bedside
- Have a warm bath before bed
- Don't have the heating up too high in your bedroom – you'll sleep better if it's on the cool side
- If ideas and thoughts are buzzing around your mind, write them down and you're more likely to stop thinking about them.
- Reduce the amount of caffeine you drink – this means coffee, tea and cola drinks.

How to help yourself wake up better

- Once you are awake, try to get up straight away – the longer you put it, off the harder it becomes
- Open the curtains when you wake up – seeing daylight can help
- Get up at the same time each day
- Once you've got up, get dressed in your day clothes
- If you are using an alarm, place it out of arms' reach so that you have to get up to turn it off.



If you have any questions,
please ring the CFS/ME team on 020 7813 8541.



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