# 5 pieces of advice about sleeplessness and insomnia

*For All Ages*

Whilst we are socially isolating and keeping ourselves safe, a good nights sleep will support our physical and mental health.

## One
### Light and Dark

Continue to wake and get up at the same time every morning. For the first two thirds of the day get plenty of bright light. Then reduce the lighting and light from screens. Try to not use screens in the hour before bed. If you are able to go out, fresh air and walking, gardening or exercise whilst avoiding close contact to others will be beneficial. Vitamin D from sunlight is important for sleep. Being indoors makes it harder for our bodies to differentiate between night and day. If you are indoors, spend some time looking out of the window, the sun is brighter than any lamp in your house, even on a grey day!
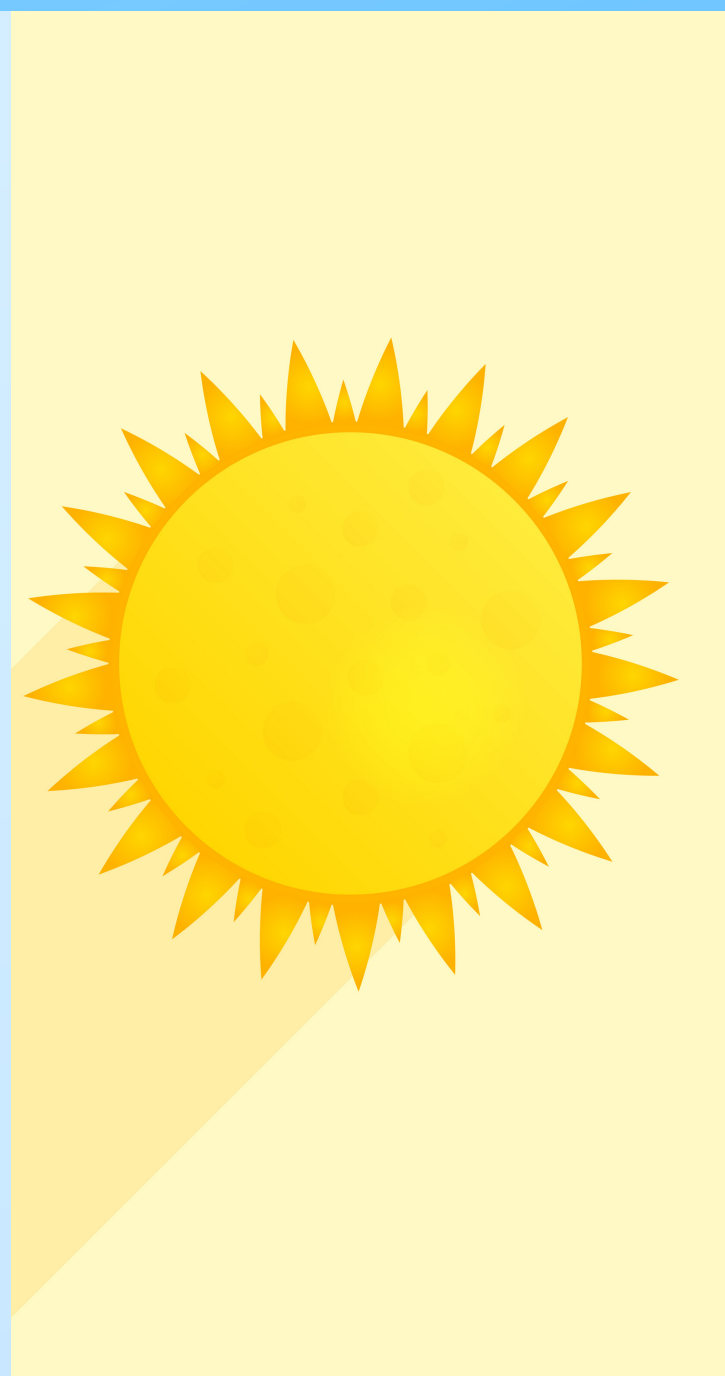
## Two
### Sensory

Our senses are going to be on the alert, so plan and do something which will be a calming treat. You could have a bath, wear a cuddly jumper, do some stretching exercises, read a book, or 'old school' do a jigsaw! You could also switch off notifications on your devices to give yourself 'down time' during the day.

# Three
## Routine

Maintain your bedtime routine and a structure to your day. It may be slightly different from the others in the household, that's fine while most of us haven't got the demands of work and a social life. If you have a later wake time, ideally make sure it's not more than 2 hours later than normal. This way you can readjust easily when we are out of lockdown. Eat and drink at regular times. Avoid caffeine after 4pm (even better after 12pm) and be aware that it can be found in chocolate and energy drinks. Alcohol may cause you to go to sleep, but too much can cause sleepless nights.
Watch and discuss the news and difficult topics earlier in the day. Make to do lists to remove worries at bedtime. Avoid using social media before bedtime. Don't start looking at household bills or talking about the coronavirus. Prioritise relaxation and sleep.

# Four
## Keeping Calm

If you are feeling anxious, plan some time for breathing exercises or yoga at the same time every day. There are many apps or websites such as Calm or Headspace with specific exercises to follow. Children like the app 'Moshi Twilight' as it has great bedtime stories.
Aim to have an hour of relaxation before bed, whilst ensuring you stick with the same bedtime each night. Make sure you go to sleep when you're feeling tired. The only way to fix not being sleepy is to stay awake. If you can't sleep, even with your relaxation app, get up and do something absorbing but with no purpose, boring even. If you think you may wake in the night, place a book on your favourite chair ready to read if you wake.

# Five
## Breaking News

Some people will find they sleep more than usual and will remember their dreams more. Others will sleep less. Everyone is different and every night's sleep is different. For adults usually 7 to 10 hours sleep is regarded as acceptable. For school aged children anything between 7 and 12 hours sleep is fine, for teens between 7 and 11 hours. If you don't feel sleepy during the day then you're probably getting the right amount of sleep.