



One minute guide to...

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP PROBLEMS

Why is it important?

We all have difficulty in sleeping at some points in our lives when either we can't fall asleep or wake up in the middle of the night, but these sleep problems usually sort themselves out within about a month depending on the reasons for e.g. a new baby, stressful events etc. This can occur at any stage of life for varying amounts of time. Longer stretches of bad sleep can start to affect our lives that can cause extreme tiredness that affects our ability to do tasks.

What can sleep problems cause?

You may find it difficult to fall asleep, lie awake for long periods at night, wake up several times during the night, wake up early and not be able to get back to sleep all affecting your mood, concentration, and increasing irritability.

In the long term this may affect your relationships (and struggle to maintain a social life); have a hard time doing everyday tasks; feeling tired during the day; and eating/snacking more.

What to do?

- **Keep regular sleep hours** – go to bed when you feel tired and get up at the same time everyday helps teach your body to sleep better. Naps are not helpful.
- **Create a restful environment** – dark, quiet, and cool environments make it easier to fall and stay asleep. Avoid caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime as it can stop you falling asleep as well as preventing deep sleep. See links below for 'tips for sleeping better'
- **Confront sleeplessness** – if you have woken up or can't sleep get up and do something relaxing for a bit (read a book, listen to some music) and then go back to bed when you feel sleepier. If you often lie awake worrying about the next day, make a list for the next day before going to bed which will help put your mind at rest.
- **Keep active**, but avoid vigorous activity near bedtime if it affects your sleep

Further Information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insomnia/>

<https://web.nrw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/#sleeping>

[Children - The Sleep Charity](#)

This guide has been produced by Education IPC Public Health & Communities Team in Cumbria.
Jan 24



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

Working for Cumberland Council and
Westmorland & Furness Council