



Long COVID Service

Sleep



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Sleep problems with Long COVID

During sleep the brain is actively carrying out many important functions. Therefore sleep is essential in helping the body in physical and mental functioning, the ability to fight disease and develop immunity.

It is common for sleep patterns to change when you are experiencing post-viral fatigue. Some people may find it hard to get to sleep or may wake often in the night, whilst others may find they are sleeping far more than usual.

The circadian rhythm, usually called 'the body clock' is the cycle that regulates our sleep-wake cycle. During the day, exposure to light signals causes alertness helping us to stay awake and active. At night time melatonin is released, a hormone which promotes sleep. When the circadian rhythm is thrown off course, it can cause problems which make sleep harder.

Consequences of sleeping too much may be:

- An increased need for more sleep leading to a vicious cycle
- It will become more difficult to concentrate and attend to things properly
- Loss of motivation and energy when awake, means feeling the need to rest more
- Being unable to enjoy life and perform your valued activities
- Daytime sleep will affect the quality and quantity of night sleep, as sleep is allocated in 24 hour cycles

Consequences of sleeping too little may be:

- Feeling un-refreshed on waking
- Reduced ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember information
- Can affect your mood leading to feeling more emotional, irritable and short tempered, or poor ability to cope with change
- Physical symptoms of tiredness and pain



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Sleep hygiene

There are things we can do to help us improve our prospects of quality sleep. You may want to use the information below to understand your sleep behaviour.

Positive influences on sleep	Usually	Negative influences on sleep	Usually
	Some-times		Some-times
	Rarely		Rarely
Going to bed at the same time		Use of electronic devices (TV, phone, computer) before bed	
Getting up at the same time		Napping in the daytime	
Getting fresh air and natural day light each day		Having a stimulating conversation\argument before bedtime.	
Keeping the bedroom cool		Drinking caffeinated drinks after 3pm	
Keeping the bedroom dark		Fizzy drinks/sugar before bedtime	
Keeping the bedroom quiet		Alcohol close to bedtime	
Doing exercises daily (stretching, walking, swimming etc)		Eating at least 3 hours before bedtime	
Clearing your mind before bed		Going to bed hungry or thirsty	
Having a shower\bath one or two hours before bedtime		Getting annoyed with yourself when you are unable to fall asleep	
Relaxation\calm music\read an easy book before lights out.		Trying too hard to sleep	

Should you need more support with your sleep problem, please discuss with your Health Professional.



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Further Resources

- www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk
- www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus
- <https://www.rcot.co.uk/recovering-covid-19-post-viral-fatigue-and-conserving-energy>
Royal college occupational therapy site for managing fatigue post COVID
- Living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty. <https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-guide-to-living-with-worry-and-anxiety-amidst-global-uncertainty/>
- Mental Health Foundation. How to look after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus>
- Mind. Coronavirus and your mental health. <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/>



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