

# Sleep and Good Health




The Respiratory Medicine Service provides inpatient and outpatient care on acute and chronic respiratory diseases.

Apart from treating conditions, we also provide diagnostic services in the form of pulmonary function tests, bronchoprovocation tests, methacholine challenge test, cardiopulmonary exercise testing, sleep study, flexible bronchoscopy and thoracocentesis and pleural biopsy. Therapeutic services in the form of intensive care, non-invasive ventilation, vaccination (pneumococcal and influenza), smoking cessation, chest tube insertion and pleurodesis are also offered to patients.

Our multi-disciplinary care team comprises of Sleep and Respiratory Medicine specialist physician, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) surgeon, Dental specialist, CPAP counsellor, psychologist, dietitian, case manager and Sleep Laboratory technician to provide holistic and continuous care to patients with sleep-related disorders.

## How much sleep do we need?

On average, an adult needs between 7 to 9 hours of sleep a day, while children need more. The table below shows the recommended number of hours of sleep children need.

 Toddlers	1 - 3 years old	12 to 14 hours
 Pre-schoolers	3 - 5 years old	11 to 13 hours
 School-going children	5 - 12 years old	10 to 11 hours
 Adolescents		8.5 to 9.5 hours

A good way to determine how many hours of sleep you need is to consider how refreshed you feel after a night's rest. Are you able to function well and lead a happy and productive life?

## The importance of good sleep

A good night's rest is the first step to living well. Sleep renews our mental and physical health for us to enjoy good health, safety and rewarding relationships.

Sleep is essential to our body's organs. Learning disabilities, memory lapses, personality/ mood changes and depression occur when we do not have enough sleep.



People with a lack of sleep experience:

- Difficulty making decisions
- Irritability
- Problems with performance
- Slower reaction

These factors increase their risk of traffic and work accidents. Not having enough sleep also affects one's health adversely and increases the risk of obesity, a pre-diabetic state or diabetes, hypertension, heart attack and stroke. The immune system also weakens and you become prone to colds, flu and infections.

If you have difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or are constantly sleepy even with the recommended number of hours of sleep, you may have a sleep disorder.

## What are sleep disorders?

There are over 80 types of sleep disorders around. These range from problems falling asleep to difficulty staying asleep.

Other symptoms include:

- Bedwetting
- Feeling sleepy or un-refreshed despite adequate hours of sleep
- Nightmares
- Not being able to stay awake or keeping to a regular sleep/ wake cycle
- Sleep walking



Common conditions include sleep breathing disorders, insomnia, circadian rhythm sleep disorders, nightmares, sleep-talking, sleep walking and bruxism. Some conditions of sleep apnoea can be life-threatening. People with sleep apnoea often awake multiple times in the night when their airway gets blocked and they stop breathing.

# Do you have a sleep disorder?

Circle “True” or “False” to the statements below:

1. I feel sleepy in the day after a good night’s sleep ( T / F )
2. I get very irritable when I cannot sleep ( T / F )
3. I often wake up at night and cannot fall asleep again ( T / F )
4. It takes me a long time to fall asleep ( T / F )
5. I wake up very early and cannot fall back asleep ( T / F )
6. I feel achy and stiff when I awake in the morning ( T / F )
7. I often awake because of dreams ( T / F )
8. I sometimes awake gasping for breath ( T / F )
9. My bed partner says my snoring keeps him/ her from sleeping ( T / F )
10. I have fallen asleep while driving ( T / F )

If you circle “True” to two or more statements above, you may need to consult a healthcare professional.

## Factors that affect good sleep

### Lifestyle

Drinking coffee, tea, colas and cocoa may make it more difficult for you to fall asleep at night. It is safe to drink moderately in the day, but you should limit yourself to no more than two cups a day because of the caffeine in them. Avoid caffeinated drinks after noon. Over drinking can cause withdrawal symptoms and insomnia.

Other reasons that cause poor sleep include:

- A hungry stomach
- Alcohol
- Cigarettes
- Drinking too much fluid
- Having a heavy meal or spicy food before bedtime



If you find yourself hungry before bed, have some warm milk, crackers or cereal to help you sleep better. Drinking too much water before bed can cause you to awake frequently to use the bathroom.

## Environmental

Insomniacs and elderly people are more easily affected by changes in their sleep surroundings. A new home, new room, new pillow and even new mattress can make it hard for them to fall asleep.

Other factors include:

- A snoring bed partner
- Child(ren) or pet(s) that crawl into bed in the middle of the night
- Coughs, kicks or a restless bed partner
- Too bright or too noisy bedroom
- Too cold or too hot bedroom



Place a comfortable bed in a dark and quiet room to sleep better.



## **Shift work and jet lag**

Erratic work schedules and frequent travels can interfere with your biological clock and sleep pattern. Shift work may keep you awake when you should be sleeping. In the same way, jet lag (time zone changes) forces your biological clock to get “out of” another time when it is not ready to yet.



## **Hormonal**

Women are also prone to hormonal fluctuations that affect good sleep. Menstrual cycles (cramps, headache, etc), pregnancy (especially third trimester), and menopause (hot flashes, excessive sweating) are the different stages in a woman's life that cause poor sleep. With increasing demands like single parenting, child-care, caring for aged parents, etc), sleep may worsen. Women are also more prone to developing obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) after menopause.

## Medications

The medications we eat can affect our sleep pattern and cause mild or serious sleep disturbances. Off-the-counter medication such as nasal decongestants, pain relievers, antihistamines and cough mixtures are known to affect sleep.

Other medications that affect good sleep:

- Antidepressants
- Arthritis medications
- Heart medications



If you have difficulty falling asleep because of a medication you are taking, please inform your doctor to have it reviewed. Never stop taking a medication without first consulting your doctor.

## Psychological factors

Many sleep problems are also associated with stress caused by school, work, poor relationships, marital problems, illness or a loss of loved one. Picking up relaxation techniques and problem-solving skills can help you cope with stress better. Anxiety, depression and mental disorders (bipolar and schizophrenia) will require assessment by a mental health professional.



## Medical illnesses

Many symptoms of chronic medical conditions worsen at night to cause breathing difficulty, snoring, cough, heartburn, aches, pain and frequent urination. By identifying the condition(s) causing these symptoms, sleep interruptions can be better managed.





## Sleep well with these tips!

1. Maintain a regular waking time, even on off days and weekends.



2. Go to bed only when you feel sleepy.



3. If you get into bed and cannot fall asleep in 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and engage in a quiet relaxing activity elsewhere. Return to bed only when you feel sleepy.



4. Use the bedroom for sleep, sex and sickness.



5. Minimise light, noise and extreme temperatures in the bedroom.



6. Avoid napping in the day. If you feel tired during the day, limit yourself to a 30-minute nap no later than 3pm.



7. Establish a relaxing bedtime routine (e.g. a warm bath, light snack, massage, music, relaxed reading, etc).



8. Exercise regularly, but avoid strenuous exercise 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.



9. Keep a regular schedule for meals, medications, chores and other activities. This helps the brain's inner clock to run smoothly.



10. Avoid large meals or excessive fluid intake before bedtime.



11. Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, soda drinks, cocoa or chocolate) 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.



12. Avoid alcoholic drinks 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.



13. Avoid smoking close to bedtime or at night.



14. Avoid sleeping pills where possible. Most healthcare professionals avoid prescribing sleeping pills to patients for more than 2 to 3 weeks. Tell your healthcare professional if you develop any of these symptoms (e.g. snoring, stop-breathing episodes, waking up short of breath, waking up with a headache or nausea) after eating sleeping pills.



**Notes:**

## For more information

### Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

1 Jurong East St 21, Singapore 609606

[www.ntfgh.com.sg](http://www.ntfgh.com.sg) | [www.jch.com.sg](http://www.jch.com.sg)

### Clinic opening hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am – 12.30pm (Selected clinics only\*)

Dental Clinic: Monday – Thursday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Friday: 8.00am – 5.00pm

\*Please refer to our websites for more details.

### General enquiries & appointments

General enquiries line: 6908 2222 (24-hr)

Fax: 6716 5500 | Email: [contactus@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:contactus@nuhs.edu.sg)

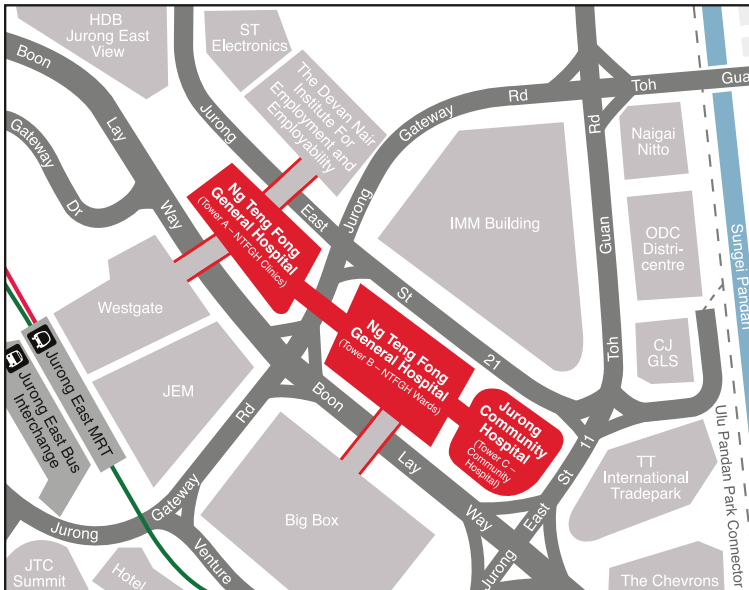
Appointment line: 6908 2222 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 8.00am – 12.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: [appointment@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment@nuhs.edu.sg)

Dental appointment line: 6716 2233 (Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 5.30pm)

Fax: 6716 2200 | Email: [JHCampus\\_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:JHCampus_Dental@nuhs.edu.sg)

## Getting there



### By train

Alight at Jurong East MRT Station

### By bus

#### Jurong East Bus Interchange

41, 49, 51, 52, 66, 66B, 78, 78A, 79, 79A, 97, 97E, 98, 98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 160A, 160M, 183, 183B, 197, 333, 334, 335, 506

#### Along Boon Lay Way

49, 99, 333, Private bus service 625, 990

### Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition. Information is accurate at the time of printing.