



National Prescribing Service Limited

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Counting down to a good night's sleep**

For some people, getting a good night's sleep can be a major problem. While the amount of sleep we need decreases as we get older, *quality* of sleep is what will enable us to get the most out of the following day.

The winter edition of *MedicinesTalk*, a newsletter written by consumers for consumers and published by the [National Prescribing Service Ltd](#) (NPS), looks at possible causes of sleep difficulties and different ways to address these causes.

"A variety of factors can cause bad sleep. These include depression, stress, illness, pain, breathing and snoring problems, restless legs syndrome and some medicines," NPS CEO Dr Lynn Weekes said.

"If you are experiencing problems sleeping it's important to determine the underlying cause in order to treat it properly. Ask your GP or pharmacist for information about ways to help improve the quality of your sleep," Dr Weekes said.

Some simple methods to improve the quality of your sleep include:

- Wake and get up at the same time each morning, even if you've had a bad night's sleep.
- Avoid napping during the day, especially in the afternoon.
- Regular exercise and sunshine help you sleep better, so be active and spend time outside during the day.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine-containing drinks (tea, coffee, cocoa and cola) in the evening: have a bedtime cup of warm milk or a carbohydrate snack instead.
- Get your body into 'going to sleep' mode by winding down with quiet activities and a regular 'going to bed' routine in the hour or so before bedtime.
- Don't read or watch TV in bed.
- Learn some relaxation techniques, and use them when you can't get to sleep.
- If you can't get to sleep, get up and do something until you feel tired.

Sleeping tablets are sometimes prescribed for short term or occasional use. Sleeping tablets may give you a less deep sleep and can also have serious side effects. They should always be used with care — follow your health professional's instructions and make sure they know about any other medicines you are taking.

For further information and to read the other articles in this edition of *MedicinesTalk* visit [www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications/medicines\\_talk](http://www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications/medicines_talk) or contact 02 8217 8700.

**ENDS**

**Media enquiries to Katie Butt, NPS Media Adviser, 0419 618 365 or [kbutt@nps.org.au](mailto:kbutt@nps.org.au)**

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