

# Common Reasons Why People Don't Get Enough Sleep



## 1 Taking sleep for granted

Many people do not realize how important sleep is. Instead, they may think of it as a waste of time. Time spent in bed asleep is time well spent.

There are many very important things that the brain needs to do while asleep. These include forming memories and going through the day's events.

Give it a chance to do these things, make sure that you spend enough time in bed.

## 2 Too much caffeine, alcohol and sleeping tablets

The caffeine in tea and coffee is a stimulant that prevents you sleeping well. Alcohol may make you drowsy, but your sleep will be very restless. Sleeping tablets are OK to use occasionally, but not regularly. They stop working well and you may become addicted.

## 3 Shift work

Many workers have shifts that keep changing. This makes it harder to get into a regular sleep pattern. Some people adjust to shift work better than others.

## 4 Jet lag

Changing time zones can disturb the sleep pattern a lot. The internal body clock will readjust to the new zone, but will take a few days.

## 5 Eating and drinking late

Eating too close to bedtime can cause heartburn and discomfort in the chest. Avoid late meals. Any snack before bedtime should be small and light. Try to limit your fluids before bedtime so that you don't have to get up to go to the toilet during the night.

## 6 Failing to wind down before bed

Exercising, computer games and TV can disturb sleep if too close to bedtime.

## 7 Stress

Day to day living can be stressful. This can interfere with sleep. Give yourself a chance to relax and unwind before going to bed. Look at ways to make your life less stressful.

## 8 Sleep disorders

Sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleep apnoea and restless legs can be very bad for your sleep. They may not be recognized for years. See our separate brochures on each of these at [www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au).

## 9 Other medical conditions and pregnancy

There are many other things that can disturb sleep. It could be a medical condition such as asthma or painful arthritis. Or it could be something psychological. The key here is find the causes and deal with them. Pregnancy can disturb for your sleep, especially in the final months. Leg cramps, discomfort in the chest and having to go to the toilet often all play a part in this.

## 10 Drug side effects

Many over the counter and prescription drugs can disturb sleep. If you feel this may be the case, talk to your doctor. There may be other options for you.

This information is produced by:

**Sleep Health Foundation**  
ABN 91 138 737 854  
[www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au)

A national organisation devoted to education, advocacy and supporting research into sleep and its disorders

**Sleep Disorders Australia**  
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[www.sleepoz.org.au](http://www.sleepoz.org.au)

A voluntary group offering assistance and support to people and their families living with sleep disorders

**Australasian Sleep Association**  
ABN 32 172 170 561  
[www.sleep.org.au](http://www.sleep.org.au)

The peak national association of clinicians and scientists devoted to investigation of sleep and its disorders

Disclaimer - Information provided here is general in nature and should not be seen as a substitute for professional medical advice. Ongoing concerns about sleep or other medical conditions should be discussed with your local doctor.

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