



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Hush Help Us Support Healing

Guidelines for Nursing Staff to help patients rest and sleep whilst in hospital

N.B. Staff should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

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Help Us Support Healing



Guidelines for Nursing Staff to help patients rest and sleep whilst in hospital

1. Purpose

These guidelines provide information for staff to promote patients rest and sleep in hospital. They are designed to be used in conjunction with any medical interventions required by patients to aid rest and sleep, for example, prescribed medication and compliment ABuHB’s “HUSH” approach (Help Us Support Healing).

NB: If a patient requests night sedation, please discuss this with the Doctor responsible for the patient’s care.

The guidelines apply to all patients who may benefit from the information/ actions contained within, there are no specified exclusions.

2. Background

Rest and sleep are essential for a person’s health and wellbeing. The effects of not having enough rest or sleep can have a significant impact on a patients’ recovery.

As a result of the Fundamentals of Care Audit 2013, it was identified that a significant number of patients were experiencing noise at night which prevented them from having a restful sleep. In addition to this, patients were also finding it difficult to rest at other times during the day due to activity and noise levels.

3. Guidelines for Staff

3.1 Assessment

The patient's pre-hospital sleep routine must be assessed as part of the Activities of Daily Living review on admission. Any challenges to a good night's sleep should be noted and a personalised care plan developed.

3.2 Environment

During Intentional Rounding, check if the patient is comfortable and prepared for a good nights sleep / adequate rest.

3.3 Activities of Living

Check if the patient has any pain, needs the toilet, or an extra blanket. These are things identified by patients that were deemed to be helpful. Think about the 5 P's:

- Pain
- Positioning
- Possessions
- Personal care
- Psychological care

Patients often struggle to rest or sleep as they are mulling over the events of the day, or worrying about what is planned for the next day. A few minutes spent listening to their worries and fears, giving appropriate information, support or reassurance can make all the difference to patient experience. Think about using the Sage & Thyme technique (communication model).

NB: It is recommended that non-medicinal means of promoting rest and sleep are preferred by the vast majority of patients. Night sedation is not covered in these guidelines.

For patients that are experiencing particular difficulties resting or sleeping offer some of the choices below: -

- A copy of the 'Tips to help you rest and sleep in hospital' leaflet. The leaflet can be found in the Patient Information Unit on the Intranet.
- A copy of the relaxation exercises leaflet. This leaflet can be found in the Patient Information Unit on the Intranet.
- A milky drink or herbal tea (where appropriate).
- Avoid caffeine.
- Instigate a Pharmacy review to ensure any prescribed medications, close to night time, are not adversely affecting sleep.

3.4 Televisions / Radio

Some patients find watching television or listening to the radio useful as a method of relaxing. If the patient is in a shared room gently remind them that other patients do require a relaxing atmosphere to sleep and encourage the use of headphones and sound minimisation.

If appropriate to do so, draw the bedside curtains a little to block out the light of the television screen.

NB: Safety takes priority and it may not be appropriate to draw the curtains. Please exercise your judgement with patient safety in mind. Visit the patient regularly to ensure that they have not fallen asleep. If they have, turn off the television.

3.5 Direct Patient Care

Regular direct patient care for some patients overnight cannot be avoided. However please be mindful that this can disturb other patients. Reduce controllable noise as much as possible. Avoid repeated disturbances by organising interventions and care needs together, where possible, so you minimise the need to disturb patients further.

3.6 Lighting

Light or poor sleepers may be startled when awoken. Take care to do so gently

Use pen torches instead of switching on overhead or over-bed lights where appropriate to do so.

Pen torches are a stock item and should be readily available on all wards, via Oracle.

3.7 Buzzers / Alarms

Respond to buzzers and alarms promptly and switch them off when attending to the patient.

Prolonged buzzer noise is a source of disturbance to other patients and means those requiring assistance are unable to rest and sleep until their care needs have been met.

3.8 Talking in Hushed Tones

Voices travel when the ward is quiet – please lower your voice and speak softly when attending to patients. You also need to be mindful of volume when speaking to staff and using the telephone. Although away from the bedside this can still interrupt rest and sleep significantly.

Support designated quiet times and implement “HUSH” recommendations.

3.9 Equipment

Squeaky wheels, banging doors, fault alarms on electronic equipment are all sources of disturbance. Please ensure that all faulty equipment is reported promptly so that it can be fixed or replaced.

3.10 Mobile Phones

Help to reduce noise from mobile phones.

It is recognised that patients use their mobile phones whilst in hospital. For some this is an important part of keeping in touch with loved ones.

If mobiles are used there are a few things that can reduce the risk of disturbing fellow patients.

- Switch the phone to silent/vibrate mode. If calls are made or received patients should try to do this out of earshot of other patients, especially during the night.
- If a call is made or received at the bedside, patients should be reminded to keep the call time to a minimum and speak quietly.

3.11 Uniform

Staff must comply with the All Wales Dress Code and ABuHB Uniform Policies, which includes wearing soft-soled, low-heeled shoes.

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Tips to help you rest and sleep in hospital



Rest and Sleep in Hospital

Some patients find it difficult to rest and sleep in hospital. There are lots of people around and noise from machines can make it difficult to relax. Being in hospital can also be daunting and you may have worries about your care, treatment or things that are happening outside of hospital; perhaps related to family or your situation at home. We would want to know if you have worries or concerns, so please discuss them with a member of staff.

If you are struggling to rest or sleep, please let the nursing staff or doctor know as they may be able to help. There are some suggestions on the following page that you may wish to try.

Top Tips To help Yourself

- Ask for a milky drink or herbal tea. These are known to aid relaxation and sleep.
- Avoid drinks containing caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant so will be more likely to keep you awake.
- Make sure you are not too hot or too cold. Nursing staff can provide extra blankets if required, or remove them if you are too hot.
- Make sure you are comfortable. If you are unwell or have had surgery it can be difficult to find a comfortable position; please ask the nursing staff if you need assistance to get comfortable.
- Try to use the toilet before you settle down for the night.
- If you are in pain please ask the nursing staff for pain relief. A survey carried out at this hospital showed that needing the toilet and being in pain are two of the main reasons patients have a disturbed night sleep
- Read for a while, listen to some relaxing music or try some relaxation exercises. Ask the nursing staff for the leaflet 'Relaxation exercises to help you rest and sleep'.

- If there is anything in your normal routine at home that helps you get to sleep please talk to the Nurses to see if they can help.

Top Tips To Help Other Patients

Respect other patients need for rest and sleep. Rest and sleep is such an important part of recovery so please be considerate of the needs of your fellow patients, especially if they choose to rest or sleep at different times to you. When the main lights are turned out please turn your TV off or use the headphones provided. If you do not have a set of headphones, please ask a member of staff who will obtain a set for you.

Please talk quietly at night time. If you are chatting to staff or patients please be mindful of other patients who may be trying to rest or sleep.

Please keep noise and movement during the night to a minimum. If you need assistance to get to the bathroom, or find something from your bedside locker, please ask a member of staff to help.

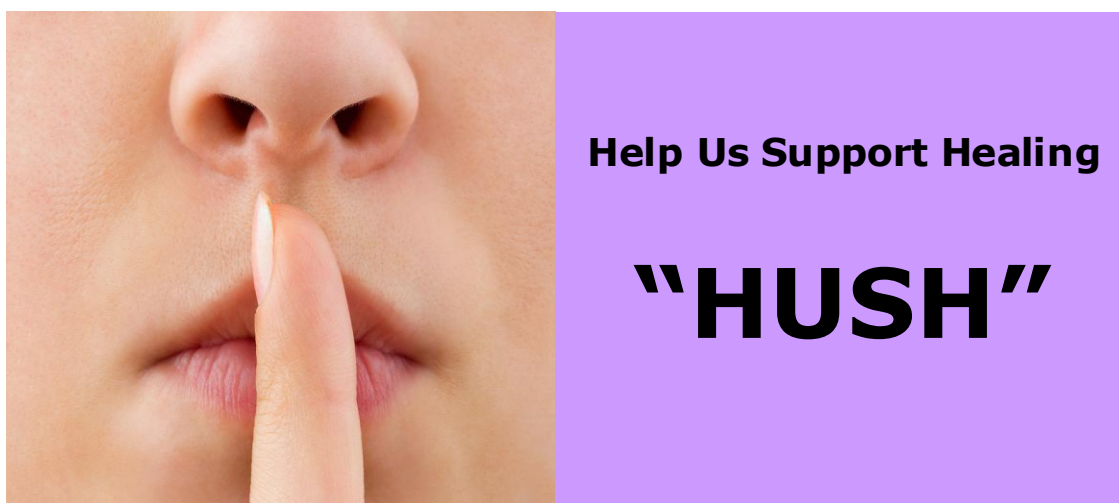
Reduce Noise From Mobile Phones

It is recognised that patients use their mobile phones whilst in hospital. For some this is an important part of keeping in touch with loved ones. If you do use your phone there are a few things you can do to reduce the risk of disturbing your fellow patients: -

- Please switch your phone to silent, if you do make or receive a call please try to do this out of earshot of other patients especially during the night.
- If you do need to make or receive a call at the bedside, please keep the call time to a minimum and speak as quietly as possible.
- If you need to speak at length, please ask a member of the nursing team whether there is somewhere private for you to do so.

Further information

If you would like further information or would like to tell us about your experience; please contact the Ward Sister or Charge Nurse.





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Relaxation Exercises To Promote Rest and Sleep

Relaxation

Relaxation is good for everyone, but if you are struggling to rest or sleep, relaxation exercises can be particularly helpful.

Relaxation Techniques

Deep Breathing

Close your eyes and try taking deep, slow breaths, making each breath even deeper than the last. Concentrate on breathing slowly in a regular rhythm. Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing. Imagine you are filling up a bottle, so that your lungs fill from the bottom.

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five (don't worry if you can't reach five at first).

Then let the breath escape slowly, counting from one to five.

Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breath.

Practice this relaxed breathing for three to five minutes.

Deep Muscle Relaxation

Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breathing; breathing slowly and deeply, as described above.

If you have pain in certain muscles, or if there are muscles that you find difficult to focus on, spend more time relaxing other parts.

You may find it easier doing the following exercises lying on your back, but do not worry if you can't, just find a comfortable position.

For each exercise, hold the stretch for a few seconds, and then relax. Repeat a couple of times. It is useful to keep the same order as you work through the following muscle groups: -

Face

Push the eyebrows together as though frowning then release.

Neck

Gently tilt the head forwards, pushing your chin down towards chest then slowly left again.

Shoulders

Pull your shoulders up towards the ear (shrug) then relax then down towards the feet.

Chest

Breathe slowly and deeply into the diaphragm (below your bottom rib) so that you are using the whole of your lungs. Then breathe slowly out, allowing the stomach to deflate as all the air is exhaled.

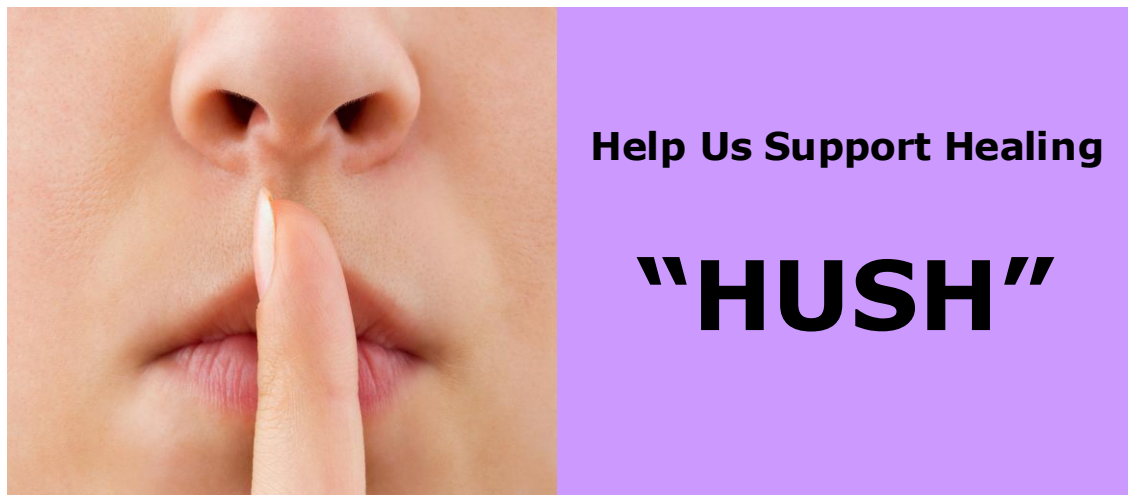
Arms

Stretch the arms away from the body then pull them towards your body, then relax.

Wrist and Hands

Stretch the wrist by pulling the hand up towards your body; then relax.

Spend some time lying quietly after your relaxation with your eyes closed.



Equality Impact Assessment Statement for inclusion in policies

This policy has undergone an equality impact assessment screening process using the toolkit designed by the NHS Centre Equality & Human Rights. Details of the screening process for this policy are available from the policy owner.