

Tips to help your recovery from illness

Sleep and Rest Page 1 of 2

Sleep and rest are crucial to your recovery.

Getting plenty of rest is arguably the most important strategy when it comes to getting back to your usual self after an illness.

Aim to add at least an extra hour to your normal sleep time whenever you feel illness creeping in, either by going to bed earlier or sleeping in later (or ideally both).

When you experience pain you may also find that your sleep is disturbed or can be interrupted by bad dreams so you may need to **add a few small naps during the day**.

There are tips to help you sleep and rest on the next page.



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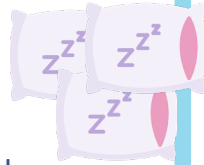
Your health

Expect to sleep more, the sleep will boost your immune system.

If you are breathless, congested or coughing a lot, **raise your pillows so that you are more upright as you sleep.**

If pain wakes you, see the [webpage on pain management](#) talk to your pharmacist or doctor about your pain medication.

Bad dreams and nightmares often occur after illness – they can be associated with overheating so try to adjust as needed. You may wish to look at **self-soothing and anxiety reduction techniques** before sleep and/or if you wake up from a [nightmare](#).



Where you sleep

Don't have any TV's, electronic gadgets etc in the room where you sleep and stop using them at least 2 hours before bed (the blue light on screens reduces the production of hormones that help you sleep [melatonin]).

Try to get the temperature of the room right for you. Have more than one bed cover available so that you can add or remove covers. Some people find that fresh air from an open window helps sleep.



If noise or light are an issue wear earplugs or an eye mask.



Lifestyle

Try to eat a diet rich in rice, oats and dairy products which can increase our desire to sleep.

Drink less caffeine (tea and coffee), towards the end of the day, **avoiding chocolate and sugary foods late in the day** can improve your sleep too.

Avoid alcohol as though it may make you sleepy, it affects the quality of your sleep and rest.

Do some physical activity each day.

If possible do some exercise, such as a walk, but do this in the morning if you can, to avoid an energy surge before bed.

