



Sleep



Muslim Health Service

Supporting the NHS

Sleep

The right amount and quality of sleep is essential in allowing us to function in our daily lives and in optimising our long term health. Irregular and poor sleep is known to lead to bad health.

According to Islamic teachings, God has created the day for work and the night for sleep. The Qur'an also states:

“And He it is who makes the night a garment for you, and [your] sleep a rest, and causes every [new] day to be a resurrection” 25:47

Just as the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) warns us against idleness, he also advises us that to take adequate rest.

Although night is a time for rest, it is also a time for remembrance of God. Muslims are advised to spend some portion of their night in prayer if they are able to since *“prayer is better than sleep”*. Some meditation before going to bed can be of benefit to everyone as it helps us unwind and therefore sleep better.

Sleep Hygiene

Good quality sleep requires good sleep hygiene. Here are some basic tips on getting good sleep.

1. Routine – Our bodies initiate sleep through a ‘sleep switch’ which is tied to our ‘biological clock’. This is why it is important to go to sleep and wake up around the same time every day. Even if one goes to sleep later than usual, it is better to avoid a ‘lie-in’ since this disturbs the sleep routine and makes us feel more tired.

2. Comfortable environment – The place where we sleep should not also be the place where we work since this stops our mind from ‘switching off’. It is also important for the environment to be warm, dark and silent.

3. Relaxing before sleep – It is important to give our minds time to unwind before going to sleep.

Other things that help are regular exercise, avoiding large heavy meals and tea/coffee before going to sleep.

Prophetic Advice on Sleep

From the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him

To make the bed ourselves – The Prophet Peace Be Upon him encouraged individuals to do all their own chores and this includes making the bed. This includes dusting the bed three times to ensure there is no dirt or insects in the bedding.

Change into sleep clothes – It is important to wear clean and loose clothing before going to sleep.

To sleep early – It is the tradition of the Prophet Peace Be Upon him to go to sleep after the night prayers, which are usually in the first part of the night. This allows individuals to tie their body clock to the cycle of day and night and optimizes functioning.

Brushing teeth before sleep – The Prophet Peace Be Upon him recommends brushing teeth before going to sleep. Going to sleep with a clean mouth is very important as during the night bacteria multiply in our mouths and accelerate tooth decay.

To sleep on the right hand side – The Prophetic manner of sleeping was on the right side with the right palm under the right cheek supporting the head and the knees slightly bent. This improves return of blood to the heart, minimises the stress on one's back and reduces the risk of aspiration. In particular Muslims are discouraged from sleeping on their stomach.

Sleeplessness

Many of us suffer from sleeplessness. A few simple tips can help us overcome it.

Many individuals find aromatherapy or warm baths helpful in inducing sleep.

Regular exercise helps tire the body and stimulate sleep

Trying to maintain a regular routine of sleep and avoiding naps during the day.

Simple breathing exercises and meditation can be helpful. One of the ways of doing this is to sit in a clean and comfortable place, breathe in through the nose for three seconds, hold our breath for a few moments and then release the breath again through the mouth.

Some people may find it helpful to think of their Creator when doing these exercises. This has the effect of calming the mind and generating a sense of profound peace within the person. This exercise can be done for variable amounts of time depending on the individual.



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