

COVID-19: Psychological Wellbeing for HSE Staff

Managing Sleep

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COVID-19 is bringing unrivalled challenges for us as individuals, as HSE employees and as part of a wider Irish society. It is important that we all as individuals do what we can to look after ourselves and also each other as we try to effectively manage this evolving situation.

The following might be helpful to provide you and your colleagues with to help with sleep so we can respond as effectively as possible in the working through the current COVID-19 response.

Guide to sleep hygiene

- **Avoid caffeine** for at least six hours before going to sleep
- **Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and street drugs** before going to sleep and throughout the night
- Avoid **bright lights**, including **television**, before going to sleep because they are stimulating
- **Don't exercise** or **eat a heavy meal** shortly before going to sleep
- **Avoid napping** during the day because it will make you less tired at night
- Make your **bedroom as comfortable** as possible by
 - keeping the **temperature at a cool** and comfortable level
 - keeping your room as **dark** as possible (use sleep mask if needed)
 - **minimizing** as much **noise** as possible (use ear plugs if needed)
- **Do not use your bed** for **working, reading, or watching television**. This way, your body will associate your bed with sleep, not with activity.
- If you have trouble falling asleep or if you wake up in the middle of the night and can't fall back to sleep, **get out of bed** and **do something soothing** until you feel tired enough to go back to sleep. **Don't lie in bed thinking** about other things; this will just make you feel more aggravated and make it harder to get back to sleep.
- Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning. Create a **regular pattern** of sleeping and waking that your body can predict.
- Use some kind of **relaxation method** before going to sleep in order to calm your body and mind. For example
 - taking a bath
 - meditating, praying or using relaxation skills
 - writing down your thoughts
- If your sleep problems persist, if you can't stay awake during the day, or if you're feeling depressed, contact a medical professional for advice.

If we want to check the facts get information from HSE Website for information <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/news/coronavirus-news/> or www.HPSC.ie where there are regular updates relating to COVID-19 in Ireland.