

GENERAL SLEEP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How many hours of sleep per night do you usually get?

EDUCATION: The average is 7-8 hours per night, but this may not be normal for everyone. The “correct” number can vary from 4 to 9 hours per night, as long as you wake feeling refreshed and have no daytime problems related to your sleep. The number of hours at night are less important than your daytime function. If there is no drop in concentration and no daytime fatigue, then sleep duration may be satisfactory even if slightly less than 7 to 8 hours per night.

2. Do you usually feel well rested when you wake up in the morning?

EDUCATION: Not feeling rested is either a result of too few hours of sleep or enough hours but a poor quality of sleep. You should feel rested and ready for the day on waking. Alternative reasons for not feeling rested are that you are waking too early for your natural rhythms, or you may be taking sedative medications that are still working when you wake up. Another simple and often overlooked reason for feeling tired in the mornings is that your bed is not adequately meeting your needs. Your mattress might be worn and no longer be giving you the support you need, or your requirements may have changed (e.g. you’re in a different stage of life or your body has changed), in which case it’s time to replace it.

3. Does daytime sleepiness or fatigue interfere with your daytime functions?

EDUCATION: Falling asleep during the day is not normal if you have had the correct duration and quality of sleep at night. An Epworth sleepiness scale score of > 10 is considered excessively sleepy.

4. Do you snore loudly and appear to stop breathing during your sleep?

EDUCATION: This may indicate obstructive sleep apnoea, which causes poor quality of sleep with excessive daytime sleepiness, as well as increasing your risk of cardiovascular disease. Answer the STOP BANG questionnaire and if you score 4 or more take this information to your doctor. They will probably ask for a home-based apnoea study to check how bad the breathing difficulties at night are.

5. Do you get an urge to move your legs with an uncomfortable feeling in the evening before going to sleep?

EDUCATION: This may be an indication of Restless legs syndrome (RLS) which can be diagnosed with the following four questions. Answering yes to all four indicates that you have RLS.

- i. Do you have an urge to move your legs often with an uncomfortable sensation?
- ii. Is it worse at night or only happen at night?
- iii. Does it only occur at rest?
- iv. Is it partially or wholly relieved by movement (i.e. once you stop moving and are at rest again the sensation tends to come back)

EDUCATION: Although usually causing a problem falling asleep, the second part of the disorder, which is called periodic limb movement disorder, may cause a poor quality of sleep and daytime tiredness. Periodic limb movements are usually small movements of the big toe (or more of the leg) twitching regularly during sleep. Both RLS and PLMS can be treated with medication. Please let your doctor know that you suspect you have this disorder if it interferes with your sleep.

6. Do you have difficulty in getting enough hours of sleep when you go to bed?

EDUCATION: *Insomnia is defined as not getting enough sleep despite allocating the right amount of time for sleep with a compromise on daytime function. There are many causes and most can be treated. Even insomnia with no cause can be treated quite well with a behavioural programme (called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for insomnia (CBT-I)). Medications to help sleep should only be used as a temporary measure until the correct treatment is implemented. A proper assessment is critical so please let your doctor know that you are battling to sleep. Considering that sleep takes up a third of your life, ensure you optimise your sleeping hours and prevent a bad bed from causing or worsening your insomnia.*

7. Are you worried about your sleep?

EDUCATION: *The questions above indicate what symptoms to look for if you suspect you may have a sleep disorder. If you are concerned, please let your doctor know – take them the information you have obtained here. You should also keep a sleep diary (time of going to sleep, waking during the night, how long you are awake for and when you wake up) for a week or so, including a score out of 5 for your daytime function, to share with your doctor.*

If you are concerned regarding your responses, speak to your healthcare clinician or contact Dr Alison Bentley for a consultation on:

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