

Helping a patient with poor sleep?



Before using sleeping tablets, have you tried:



Starting a sleep diary?

- All patients started on sleeping tablets should already be on a sleep diary.



Simple lifestyle interventions?

- Exercise during the day, avoid heavy meals late at night.



Reducing light and noise levels on the ward?

- Stop doors from slamming, reduce conversation volumes.



Reducing observation levels (where appropriate)?

- Are hourly observations beneficial, or stopping the patient from entering deep sleep? (See CNTW SleepWell project)



Reducing caffeine and nicotine intake?

- Avoid caffeine/nicotine in the evening, reduce the number of cups per day.
- Decaffeinated coffee still contains caffeine (20% that of a normal coffee).
- 1 can of pop contains the same amount of caffeine as an espresso.



Pharmacist medication review of stimulating medication?

- SSRIs, levothyroxine, antiparkinsonian drugs, procyclidine.



Increasing natural light exposure?

- Patients should go outside every day. Indoor lighting does not have the same effect as natural light, nor does standing behind a window.



Setting a regular wake up time, and only going to bed when sleepy

- Staying in bed when unable to sleep can worsen insomnia.

Sleeping **tablets** can aid poor sleep, but long term use can lead to side effects. They should be reviewed every 2-4 weeks.

Sleeping tablets are best prescribed as an 'as required' medication. Patients should try to sleep without them before taking them, to reduce the chance of tolerance and dependence.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for insomnia (CBTi)* is as effective as sleeping tablets in the short-term, and more effective long-term. It is recommended by NICE as first line where available.

This poster is part of a set of educational resources to improve sleep on inpatient wards. A video, educational handbook, and other resources are available here: <http://www.cntw.nhs.uk/smartersleep>

**For further information on CBTi please visit: <https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/services/first-step/what-does-first-step-offer/cbt-i-cbt-for-insomnia/>*

