

- Be active. Exercise, particularly in the morning. Include a warm-up, an aerobic component, stretching, and cooling down. These will improve your sense of energy.
- Avoid disturbances at night such as getting up to smoke or having midnight snacks. These things can disturb your body and make it hard for you to settle-down.
- Finally, stop worrying and work on improving your sleep habits, rather than worrying how long you sleep, and your patterns will gradually improve. Sleep is part of being healthy. Improving sleep is achievable by making yourself healthier in every way.



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Please note: To be eligible for our service treatment costs must be authorized by an insurance company, WSIB, or other funding agency.

CHRONIC PAIN MANAGEMENT

CHRONIC PAIN AND SLEEP

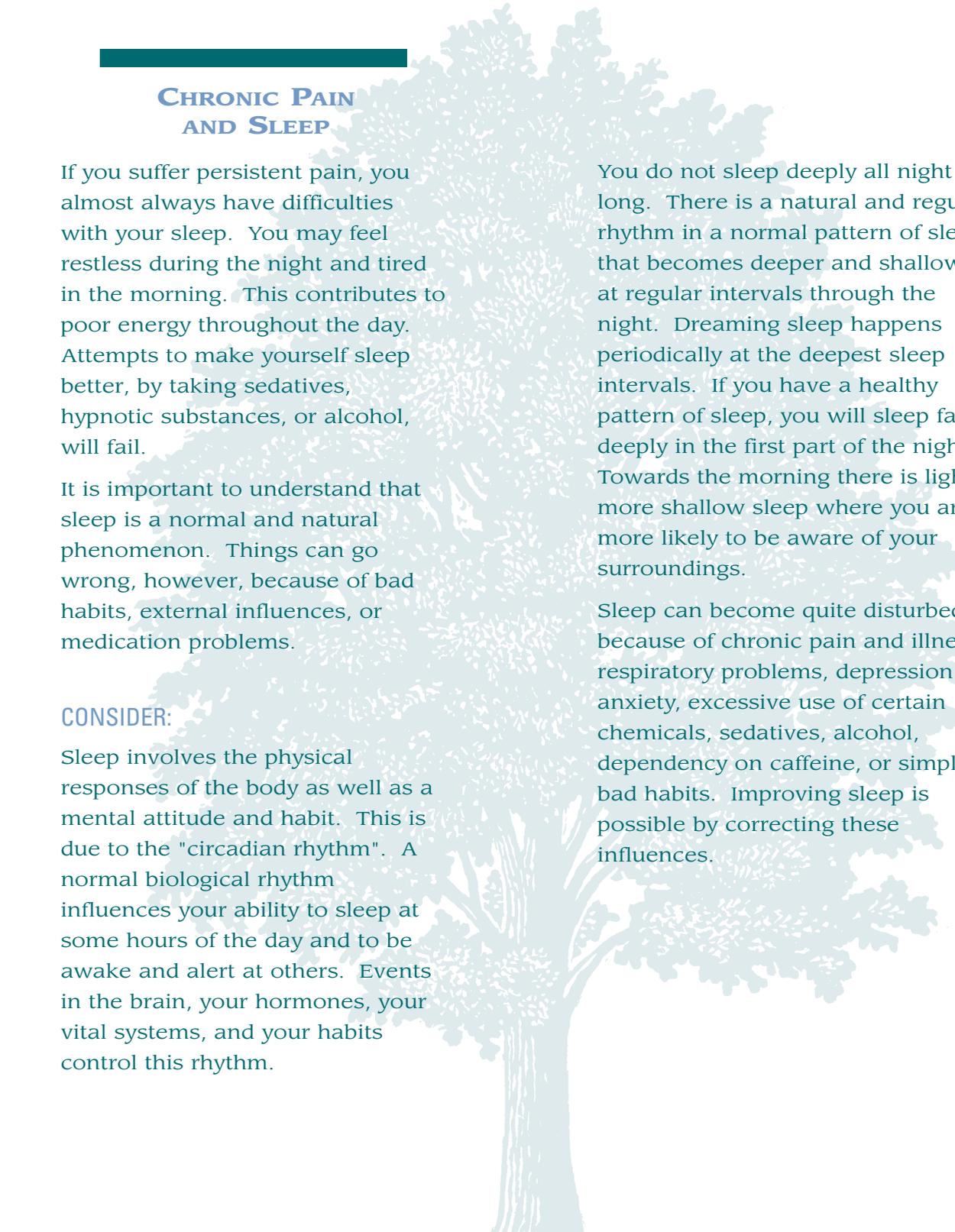


Chronic Pain Management Unit

A program of Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation



Chronic Pain Management Unit



CHRONIC PAIN AND SLEEP

If you suffer persistent pain, you almost always have difficulties with your sleep. You may feel restless during the night and tired in the morning. This contributes to poor energy throughout the day. Attempts to make yourself sleep better, by taking sedatives, hypnotic substances, or alcohol, will fail.

It is important to understand that sleep is a normal and natural phenomenon. Things can go wrong, however, because of bad habits, external influences, or medication problems.

CONSIDER:

Sleep involves the physical responses of the body as well as a mental attitude and habit. This is due to the "circadian rhythm". A normal biological rhythm influences your ability to sleep at some hours of the day and to be awake and alert at others. Events in the brain, your hormones, your vital systems, and your habits control this rhythm.

You do not sleep deeply all night long. There is a natural and regular rhythm in a normal pattern of sleep that becomes deeper and shallower at regular intervals through the night. Dreaming sleep happens periodically at the deepest sleep intervals. If you have a healthy pattern of sleep, you will sleep fairly deeply in the first part of the night. Towards the morning there is light, more shallow sleep where you are more likely to be aware of your surroundings.

Sleep can become quite disturbed because of chronic pain and illness, respiratory problems, depression or anxiety, excessive use of certain chemicals, sedatives, alcohol, dependency on caffeine, or simply bad habits. Improving sleep is possible by correcting these influences.

THERE ARE A FEW KEYS:

- Stop depending on chemicals that may interfere with sleep, such as alcohol, caffeine and some prescription drugs.
- Establish a daily bedtime pattern to control your circadian rhythm; especially setting a bedtime and a rising time each day regardless of whether you feel you have had a "good night" or not, until you establish a clear sleep rhythm. (Sleeping in the morning does not make you more rested.)
- Do not worry about thinking or being aware of your thoughts after you go to bed. Your brain thinks all the time; sometimes you are aware of it and sometimes you are not. You can sleep while still having thoughts in your mind.
- Control the use of light. Keep it dark when you sleep, and then first thing in the morning when it is time to rise, get into a brightly lit area.