

CLINIC LOCATION

This program is offered at the **Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic** within the **McMaster University Medical Centre** located at:

1200 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3Z5
Yellow Section, 4th Floor
T: 905-521-2100 ext. 44621 F: 905-577-8022
www.hhsc.ca/pain

Please visit the hospital website at
www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca for directions and parking.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

www.hhsc.ca/pain

CHRONIC PAIN AND SLEEP

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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, poorer mood and irritability. Attempts to make yourself sleep better, by taking sedatives, hypnotic substances, or alcohol are often not effective.

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.

About your natural sleep rhythm

Sleep involves the physical responses of the body as well as the 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.

If you are still having trouble sleeping, please speak with your doctor. You may want to complete a sleep diary to help you and your doctor understand your sleep patterns.

Helpful Sleep Routine Tips:

Make adjustments to your lifestyle by creating a routine at bedtime:

Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Our bodies like routine! Get up at the same time each morning, no matter how much or how little sleep you get. Setting an alarm may help. Place a cover over the clock. It is hard to relax if you are watching the clock.

Do a relaxing activity about an hour before going to bed such as taking a warm bath, listening to quiet music, stretching/yoga, deep breathing, reading a book or drinking warm milk. The secret is to find something that works to unwind you before bed.

Make your bedroom dark, quiet, comfortable and cool. Use a comfortable bed with a pillow that is right for you.

Go to bed only when you feel sleepy. If you cannot fall asleep after 15 minutes, go to another room and do something relaxing like reading or listening to music.

Use your bedroom only for sleep and sex. Turn off all Electronics. Unplug from all screens - TVs, computers, phones, tablets at least 30 minutes before bed.

Let your body be tired. Do exercises as part of your every day routine. Finish exercising a few hours before bed so you are not up and energetic at bed time.

Avoid daytime napping longer than 20 minutes and after 3 p.m.

Be mindful of when you eat. Avoid large meals closer to bedtime.

Reduce alcohol, nicotine and caffeine use. Avoid caffeine within 6 hours of bedtime; alcohol and smoking within 2 hours of bedtime.

Park your anxieties well in advance of going to bed. You may find it helpful to have a worry period in the late afternoon or early evening. This may be the time to write down problems and possible solutions.