

# 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/>*