

COVID-19 AND SLEEP

A LOOK BACK AT OUR WEBINAR ON THURSDAY, MAY 14

WINSTON MCQUADE, HOST

JOSÉE SAVARD, PH.D., GUEST

FULL PROFESSOR AT THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY OF LAVAL UNIVERSITY

RESEARCHER AT THE CHU RESEARCH CENTRE IN QUEBEC CITY
AND AT THE CANCER RESEARCH CENTRE AT LAVAL UNIVERSITY



PROCURE
Halte au cancer de la prostate.
The Force Against Prostate Cancer.

The pandemic is a period that causes many people to lose quality of their sleep and that is normal. It is certainly a source of stress, anxiety, or even depression, important factors in sleep problems: it becomes more difficult to fall asleep, awakenings are frequent, worries keeps you awake, and tiredness is felt in the morning. It is perfectly normal for sleep patterns to be disturbed - especially if you have prostate cancer or undergoing treatment - when we are living an exceptionally abnormal situation.

HERE ARE 5 POINTS TO REMEMBER.

1. THE OVERFLOW OF NEWS PREVENTS YOUR BRAIN FROM TAKING A BREAK

It keeps your brain active and maintains some form of anxiety - to varying degrees depending on whether you are already an anxious person. This means that in the evening, if your brain is challenged before going to bed, it continues to simmer over bad news, which in turn prevents it from taking a necessary and sleep-friendly break. Your brain must associate bed and bedroom with sleep. The only exception accepted in your bedroom? Sex or masturbation.

2. GIVE YOUR SLEEP HORMONE A CHANCE TO DO ITS JOB

Melatonin, your sleeping friend, is secreted by your body when you are in the dark. Hence the importance of lowering the intensity of the lights at the end of the evening and reducing your exposure to blue light - emitted by tablets and cell phones - in order to increase and facilitate the secretion of your hormone to help you fall asleep. You can still take it as a supplement, although there are few studies on its effectiveness or harm. Prescribed sleeping pills should only be taken a few nights a week. **If you take them every day, you shouldn't go beyond 4 to 6 weeks.** Talk to your pharmacist. And ask her/him for advice if you are considering over-the-counter sleeping pills.

3. GOING TO BED AND GETTING UP AT THE SAME TIME AND ADOPTING A SLEEP ROUTINE IS A MUST!

To keep a good sleep pattern, you should always go to bed and wake up at the same time, 7/7 days. You must set aside 1 to 2 hours before going to bed to decompress: read a good book, listen to soft and calm music, avoid hot baths or a sporting activity. You cannot fall asleep? After 30 minutes, get out of bed and do a relaxing activity, dim light (reading, drawing, etc.) until you feel drowsy, then go back to bed. In addition, limit naps to a maximum of 60 minutes before 3 p.m. Longer naps later in the day can take away a portion of your deep sleep that you should have at night. Consequently, they can induce fatigue and heaviness that one feels the next day.

4. SLEEP APNEA, SNORING AND OTHER SLEEP BARRIERS

If snoring wakes you or your partner, if when you wake up, you breathe deeply as if you were short of air, or if you wake up and have a headache, you may have sleep apnea. **This condition should be diagnosed and not taken lightly. You should consult.** On the other hand, hot flashes, induced by hormone therapy, do not endanger your life. But they are particularly disturbing for many men being treated for prostate cancer.

5. HELP YOURSELF IF YOU ARE ON HORMONE THERAPY; FOLLOW THE TIPS BELOW

As mentioned above, hot flashes are disturbing and are associated with frequent awakenings at night.

The following tips may help you better manage this side effect of treatment.

- (1) Avoid overheating the bedroom; you want a cool environment.
- (2) Wear and sleep in pajamas and cotton sheets (e.g. Modal cotton) to help evaporate sweat.
- (3) Put each hot flash in perspective by saying that it will pass and that you will fall asleep afterwards.
- (4) Return to the strategy mentioned in point # 3 if you do not sleep after 30 minutes.
- (5) Move during the day, the benefits of exercise will helping and you and avoid large meals rich in fat in the evening.
- (6) Get a low-dose anti-depressant to help limit this side effect and to help you sleep better.

IF YOUR SLEEP DISTURBANCES PERSIST OVER TIME, YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR.

SIF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING STRESS, ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION, YOU CAN CONTACT **THE INFO-SOCIAL 811 SERVICE.**