



# Menopause

## Eating Well and Sleep



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# Menopause

- Some of the information we will cover, you may know and be aware of, however, as a transitional part of life it is good to evaluate habits and behaviours



# Symptoms & Potential Effects

- There are a variety of symptoms which can be experienced including;
- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Sleep disturbances
- Tiredness
- Increased risk of certain diseases e.g. CVD (due to fall in oestrogen levels)
- Joint pains, aches
- Headaches
- Memory loss
- Anxiety, depression
- Weight gain



# Managing Symptoms

- Support from Health Professionals; HRT, medication, therapies e.g. CBT
- There are a number of factors, including lifestyle which can help manage some symptoms
- We will explore more around factors for managing symptoms over the following slides, focusing on aspects of diet, hydration, physical activity and sleep
- It could be useful to keep a symptom diary, this could help identify causes and what strategies to implement and whether they are helping

# Bone health

- Osteoporosis risk can be increased – loss of oestrogen in menopause increases calcium loss. From circa 35 onwards, calcium loss from our bones occurs.

## Calcium

Aim for two to three portions of calcium-rich foods every day which could include:

- a third of a pint/ 200ml milk,
- a matchbox size piece of cheese,
- a small yoghurt

*If consuming dairy alternatives such as soya products choose those that are fortified*

## Vitamin D

- Made by skin in response to sunlight exposure. Happens over circa 6 months in the UK (Apr – Sept)
- Foods containing Vitamin D include fortified products such as cereals and plant based milks eggs, oily fish

## HRT

Helps maintain oestrogen levels and protect bone health.



- Increased risk of developing heart disease, some simple changes/swaps could help reduce the risk including:
- Being mindful of fat intake;
  - opting for unsaturated fats over saturated fats such as spreads and oils
  - lower fat dairy products,
  - healthy cooking methods
  - avoiding fatty cuts of meat, removing excess fat and skin
- Reduce salt by avoiding or limiting processed foods such as ready meals, soups and sauces, and limiting salted snacks
- Swap to high fibre foods
- Aim for at least two portions of fish per week, one which should be oily
- Fruit and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, fibre and other plant nutrients such as antioxidants that help protect your heart

e intake of refined sugars



# Food & Mood

- Food & mood can affect many choices
- Due to change in hormones, if experiencing symptoms including anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep this could impact food choices which could then lead to weight gain.
- Weight gain - for many this affects self confidence and which could impact other existing symptoms
- If we are not adequately hydrated or lacking in nutrients it can affect our concentration affecting our working day, home and social lives, and can lead to experiencing headaches, depression, tiredness

# Assess hunger levels

- Hunger Scale – can help with identifying is it physical hunger or emotional hunger
- Often mistake thirst for hunger
- Is it emotional hunger or physical hunger?





# The Hunger Scale



# Exercise

- Exercise can be an effective factor in weight management, decreasing the risk of osteoporosis, for heart health, can be useful in limiting hot flushes, positively impact on mood, and sleep, and can be a sociable outlet
- There is a wide variety of exercise options available to us. The following are reported to have been particularly successful in managing menopausal symptoms:
  - Aerobic exercises; e.g. cycling, walking, jogging, running and swimming
  - Zumba
  - Yoga; this can be a good gentle exercise to do in the evenings or if exercising closer to bed time. Can aid with relaxation, and sleep.
- Resistance activities, such as using weights, are especially important to both preserve and build muscle mass.

Can build into daily and social activities and routines

- Whatever form of treatment you choose, it is worthwhile to engage in regular exercise as a part of your routine.

# Phytoestrogens

- Interchangeably may also be referred to as isoflavones or plant oestrogens
- Quite similar to human oestrogen.
- If consumed on a regular basis in suitable amounts can produce mild oestrogen-like effects
- Can benefit by relieving symptoms of menopause, particularly hot flushes
- It can take 2-3 months for benefits of plant oestrogens to be apparent
- May work better for some than others
- *Foods containing phytoestrogens (such as soya and linseeds) are also heart friendly so some may opt to include calcium-enriched soya products like milk, yoghurts, soya and linseed bread or edamame beans 2-3 times each day before opting for supplements.*
- Consuming plant oestrogens several times a day appears to be more effective opposed to one larger dose

# Caffeine and Alcohol

- Both stimulants
- Can impact on hot flushes, sleep, mood, and anxiety
- Consider caffeine consumption from beverages like coffee, tea and colas and consider choosing/replacing with decaffeinated drinks
- Adhere to alcohol guideline recommendations. Completely avoid if you feel it aggravates symptoms.

# Eating, drinking & sleep

- Limit/avoid caffeine in the day, in the evening opt for a non caffeinated beverage
- Avoid/limit alcohol in the evenings can impact sleep quality
- Consider caffeine consumption and frequency, including habits such as when dining out
- If we are not adequately hydrated or lacking in nutrients it can affect our health & wellbeing in many ways including tiredness
- Importance of regular balanced meals, and staying hydrated
- Serotonin helps to regulate sleep, our mood, and appetite. It also has cognitive functions, including in memory and learning
- Serotonin is made from tryptophan
- Sources of tryptophan in our diet come from many dietary sources including beans, lentils, meat, fish, nuts, seeds, eggs, milk and cheese
- Eating before bed time – important to consider time and type of meal

# What can affect our sleep?

Health  
Conditions

**Menopause** (hot flashes, restless leg syndrome, anxiety etc)

Caring  
Responsibilities

Environment

Waking in the  
night

Time of the year



Activity levels

Shift work

**Age** (We lose 2% of our deep sleep each decade after adolescence)

## Common misconceptions about sleep

1. *“I should sleep through all night”* -Everyone wakes 4 –5 times a night but we are often not aware of this
2. *“I’ve not slept at all”* -We are not very good at judging how much sleep we have actually had. Hot flashes mean we will remember the waking more than usual night waking – can increase the anxiety about sleeping well.
3. *“REM sleep is the important bit”* –All stages of sleep are important and have different roles.
4. *“Its important to try hard to sleep”* –Normal approach to sleep (an unconscious process) –IS NOT THINKING ABOUT IT!

# What drives our sleep?

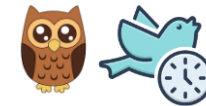
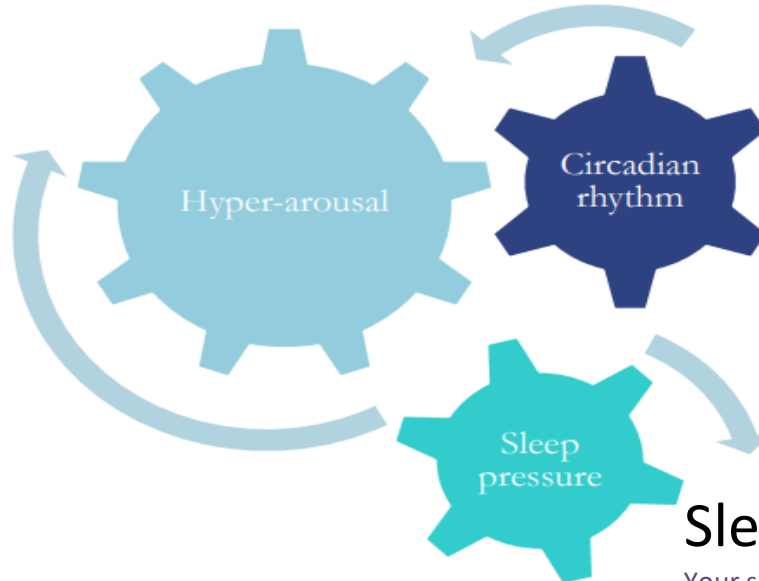
## Hyper arousal

Can occur when you are under a lot of stress, brain creates stress hormones that activate the brain pathways and make you feel more awake.

## Circadian rhythm

Your “biological clock” that responds to external cues in your environment (sunrise and sunset) to influence what times you fall asleep and wake up.

Morning lark vs Night Owl  
(Chronotypes)



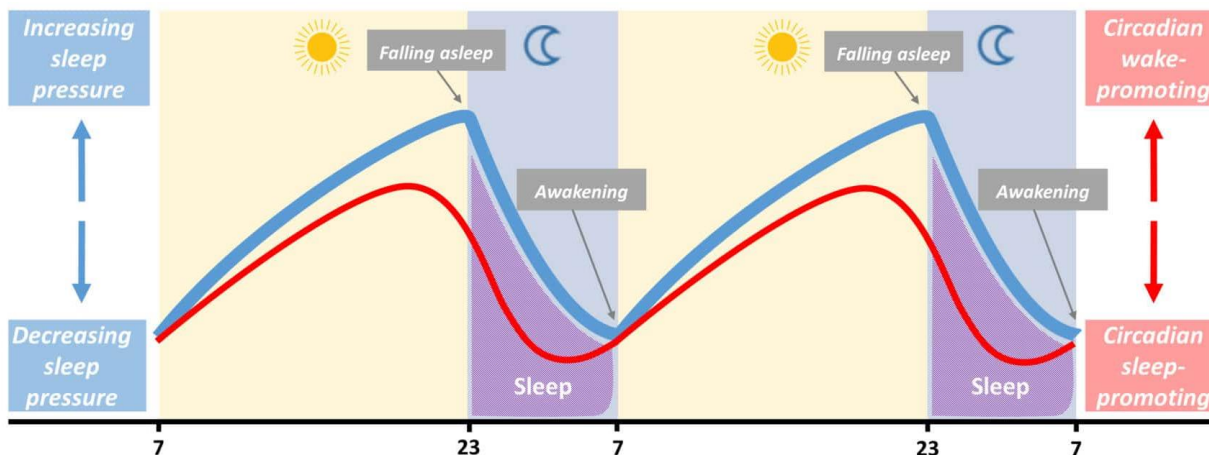
## Sleep pressure

Your sleep drive can be thought of as a balloon that gradually fills up during your waking hours and then slowly deflates during sleep.

Longer wakefulness, mental/physical effort, activated immune system = increased Adenosine and “pressure” to sleep builds.

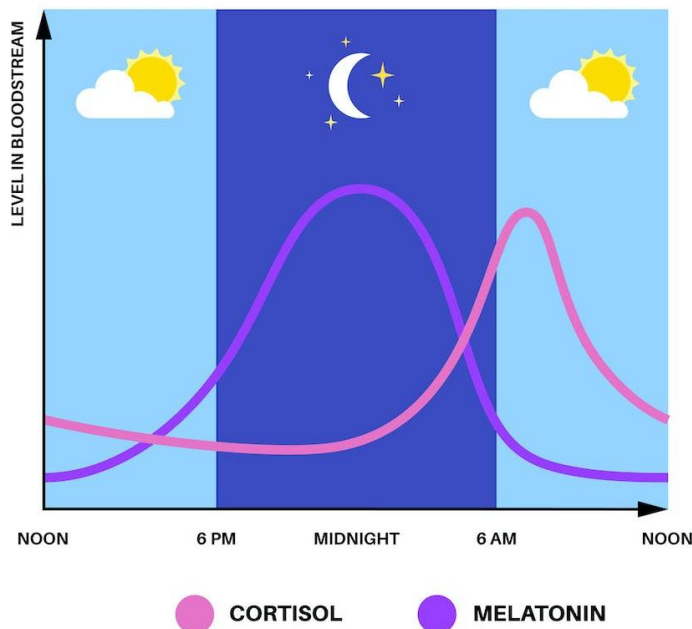


# What drives our sleep?



## Stress Hormone

Create a relaxing bedtime routine. When you are stressed or anxious, your body produces more cortisol (the stress hormone).



## Hormone of Darkness

Any light natural or artificial will suppress melatonin making it harder to fall asleep

You only need **4 minutes of daylight** to reduce the production of melatonin. Getting up and going outside in the morning for some exposure to natural daylight can really give you a boost for the day!

According to some research, using screens before you go to bed can double the length of time it takes you to fall asleep

# Sleep Pressure

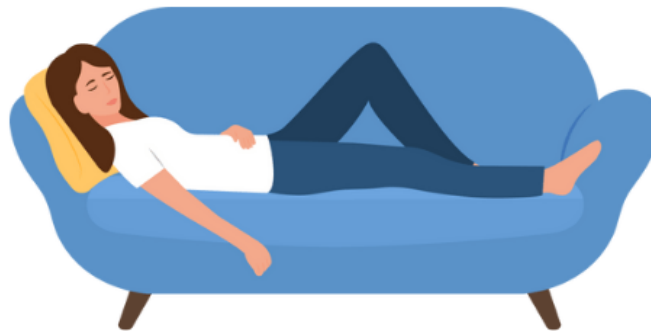
## What is sleep pressure?

- Sleep pressure is a phenomenon that makes us tired, sleepy and helps us to fall asleep.
- Sleep pressure builds up throughout the day and makes us sleepy in the evening
- This is all due to a molecule called adenosine.
- Adenosine gradually accumulates in our brain throughout the day and the more adenosine accumulates, the sleepier we feel.

# Sleep Pressure

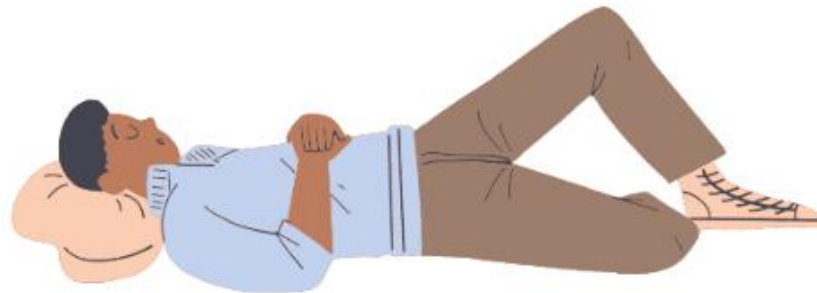
## Napping is it ok or not ok?...

- Naps boost energy, motivation, mental health and cognitive performance, but can also disrupt your nightly sleep
- No matter when we sleep .... Sleep is sleep and when we nap this too will reduce adenosine from our brains...reduce sleep pressure
- But there is a TRICK! No more than 30 minutes



# Assessing your sleep

- We can only control wakefulness not sleep
- We need to feel calm and safe to sleep. – more like a dimmer switch than a light going off. How can we do this?
- Sleep diaries – information on times of going to sleep, how long it takes to get off to sleep, how many times you woke , when you woke how long were you awake for? What time you woke up, what time you got up, rates sleep quality. Do you have naps in the day?
- [SleepFoundation SleepDiary.pdf](#)
- Wearable devices? Can be helpful but maybe misleading with the information



# Sleep Diary

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_



Morning							
Day of week:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
What time did you get into bed?	PM AM	PM AM	PM AM	PM AM	PM AM	PM AM	PM AM
What time did you try and go to sleep?	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM
How long did it take you to fall asleep?	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.
What time did you wake up this morning?	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM
How many times did you wake up during the night?							
No. of times							
No. of minutes							
Last night I slept a total of:	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.	HRS. MINS.
How would you rate your sleep quality?							
Very Poor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fair	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Good	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Very Good	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Was your sleep disturbed by any factors? If so, list them here (ex. allergies, noise, pets, discomfort/pain, etc.)							
Any other comments about your sleep worth noting?							

Evening							
Day of week:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I consumed caffeine in the: (AM) morning, (PM) afternoon/evening, (LN) late night, (NA)							
AM, PM, LN, NA							
How many?							
How much exercise did you get today?							
No. of minutes							
Time of day AM, PM, LN, NA							
Did you take a nap? (check one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, for how long?							
List all medications, vitamins, and supplements you took today							
Approximately 2-3 hours before getting to bed, I consumed:							
Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1+ glasses of water, juice, milk, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A heavy meal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caffeine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My nighttime routine included: (ex. taking a bath/shower, stretching, reading a book/magazine, using mobile devices or a computer)							

# Sleep Debt

- Not getting adequate sleep causes a “sleep debt” to build over time; sleep is needed to “pay down” this debt. For example, a person needing 8 hours of sleep but getting only 6 hours would accumulate a sleep debt of 2 hours that day.
- Allow extra time to sleep if you were not able to get enough sleep the previous night. A person does not necessarily need to pay back hour for hour the lost sleep, since the body sometimes sleeps more soundly to pay down the debt. Ongoing fatigue, sleepiness, and other negative effects during wake time could reflect a build-up of sleep debt.
- **It is risky to build up a sleep debt and try to pay it off later.** Although your level of sleepiness may return to normal after a day or two of recovery sleep, your neurocognitive performance can still be lower than baseline.
- Thus, **getting adequate sleep on a regular basis, is important.** This is especially important if you work 12-hour shifts, do not sleep much between them, and then try to catch up on sleep after the block of shifts ends.





The recipe for sleeping better.



- 1. Improving Sleep Opportunity.** Preparation for sleep is important.
- 2. Improving Sleep Efficiency.** Getting back to sleep when you wake in the night improves your sleep efficiency.
- 3. What you do in the day** has a big impact on how well you sleep at night. (exercise, relaxation, diet and stimulants, rise up and wind down routine)



# Sleep Environment





# Preparing for sleep and winding down

Routine that start **1-1.5 hours before sleep.**

This involves slowing down and stopping any activities your involved in and starting your routine, cleaning your teeth, locking up, getting in night clothes.

Having a regular time for bed and waking

Relaxing activities

What are your relaxing activities  
Do you need to introduce new ones?



# Relaxation Journaling

- Its natural to reflect on your day before sleep – but this needs putting to rest
- Set aside 20 minutes to do this, thinking about what you have done and how you feel about it.
- Write down any worries, with any 'to dos' for tomorrow
- Remind yourself you have already put the day to rest
- Remind yourself you don't need to do this again.
- Use paper to write down any further things that aren't on your to do list and some things you are grateful for.
- Congratulate yourself for putting the day to rest and follow this with something grounding or a relaxing activity.
- This takes practice – should be done early on in your wind down routine.



# Building the Association

## Bed = Sleep



- Bed is for sleeping and sex
- Only go to bed when you are tired
- If you cannot sleep after **15 minutes** get up out of bed and do a relaxing activity (no electronics)

Our bed should be the cue for sleep. If we spend significant amounts of time lying in bed awake then we will link this space with wakefulness and frustration. Following the advice above will help retrain the mind that bed is for sleep.

- What is my ideal time to go to bed to sleep? Setting your sleep window.

# Waking up in the night...

- If you wake feeling anxious or scared using grounding and soothing – 5,4,3,2,1.
- We need to feel calm and safe to fall asleep... Try breathing and relaxation exercises.
- ‘Run another programme’ –place your full attention on something else ( safe place visualisation, meal planning, enjoyable holidays, try safe and soothing themes and topics) – prepare these and have them ready by the bed to start a new habit.
- Worry needs the oxygen of attention, shift your attention on to something else.
- If after 15 minutes you are still awake get up.
- Have items next to the bed that will help you feel comfortable  
Iced water bottle for cooling and a refreshing drink.



# Getting back to sleep

- If you wake with a hot flash taking care of yourself and having things to hand to reduce interaction with light or excessive movement.. What is this for me?
- Get out of bed if you are unable to sleep for longer than **15 minutes**
- Do something relaxing and **boring** – reading a book, milky drink, use your planned relaxation activities, sit in your agreed place (non-stimulating) good temperature
- Go back to bed when you feel sleepy tired
- Avoids associating bed with distressing wakefulness.
- Short term pain for long term gain



# Relaxation

Can be used before bed or when you can't sleep or wake in the night. Aim is not to sleep but to relax and reduce distress associated with poor sleep - you need to have a plan! Not using a phone or television where possible – old phones can be helpful with everything else stripped off it – lowest light levels

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Safe Place visualisation
- Breathing practices
- Appreciation / gratitude practices – orientating the mind to what's going well – what's safe
- Can personalise a relaxation audio file.
- Non fiction book
- Podcast
- Create coping cards (positive statements; 'I can deal with this' 'I have enough sleep to get through' 'you can have a lie in on Saturday') what would you say to a friend.?
- If you use a HR monitor or activity tracker it can helpful to see your efforts.

# Rise up routine

- Groggy, morning blues is something called **sleep inertia** (usually lasts 5 -30mins). It happens when you wake suddenly during slow wave sleep often because of an alarm clock.
- Getting up at the same time will learn to begin waking up and reduce sleep inertia
- Avoid snoozing
- Start the day – have a rise up routine. (make the bed / shower/ get dressed)
- Expose yourself to sunlight when possible
- Increase activity will help it pass more quickly.
- Upbeat music or sounds – can be natural sounds – Perky radio station ?
- Remember... We can only control wakefulness not sleep, so use your routine and daily activities to stack the odds in your favour



## Managing distressing insomnia

- If you are awake and feeling distressed and overwhelmed using distraction.
- Rating your distractions from 0-10 in terms of effectiveness.
- Finding ones that aren't stimulating but take you attention
- Having a plan written out and trying it. The aim is not to fall back to sleep but not to feed the worry and fear.
- Changing the channel from Worry to something else. We wouldn't sit in the day and ruminate and catastrophise.



# Relaxation Activity



# Summary

- Various factors can help manage many menopausal symptoms and are important to consider
- There may be some changes you wish to implement
- It is important to work with your GP to find the treatment options that are best suited to you
- When making changes to lifestyle you may wish to opt to concentrate on a few small changes at a time
- Some changes may take some time to notice benefits, consistency is key
- HRT, medication and CBT could be helpful alongside lifestyle aspects including dietary approaches, adequate hydration, exercise, weight management, good sleep and routine, smoking cessation, and stress management techniques
- Please seek further help at any time as through Healthcare Professionals, support sites, groups, as well as initiatives running there may be further avenues that could help you

## Further information tools & support

- Speak with GP
- Menopause Matters: [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk),
- British Menopause Society (<https://thebms.org.uk/find-a-menopause-specialist/>)
- Book – ‘Menopause: the change for the better’ - by Henpicked and Deborah Garlick.
- <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>
- <https://henpicked.net/>
- ‘Squeezy’ an app supporting people with their pelvic floor muscle exercise programmes.  
<https://www.squeezyapp.com/>. Designed by chartered physiotherapists specialising in pelvic health

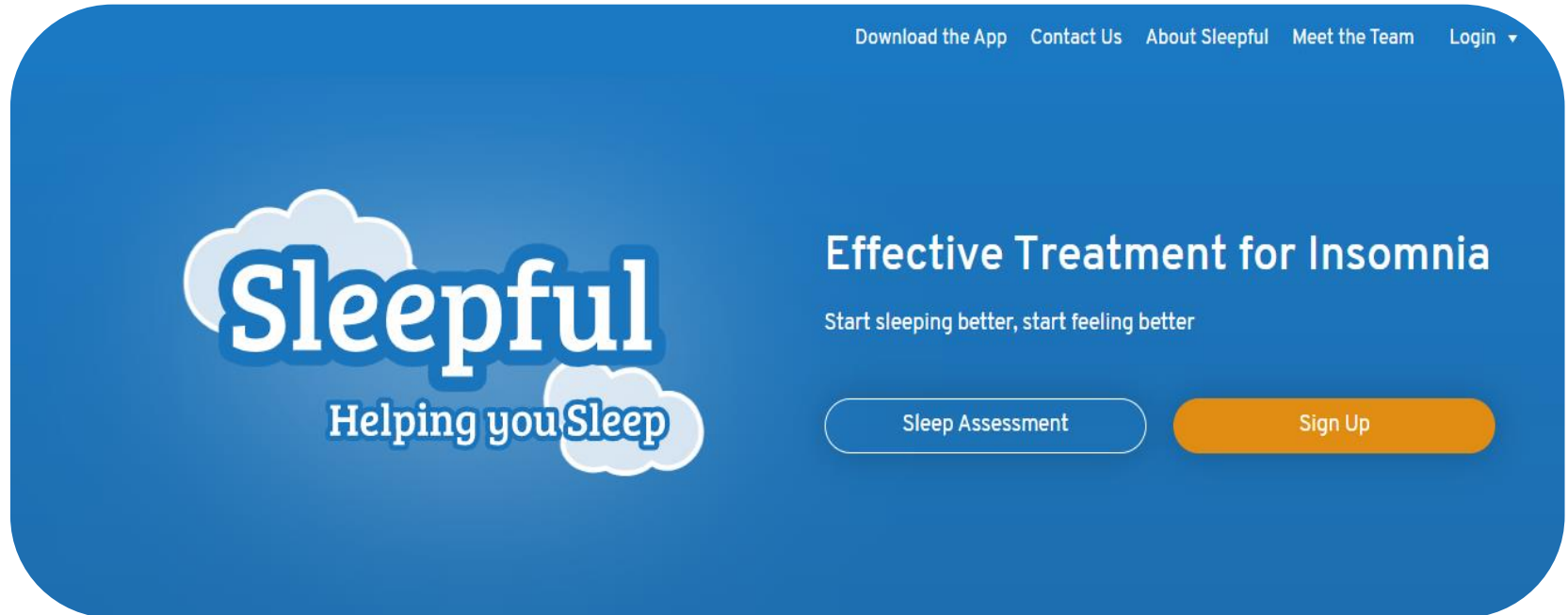
# Further information tools & support



## Apps:

- **Headspace (FREE FOR NHS)** - stories, meditation, sleep sounds, wind downs, kids and parents, guide to sleep
- **Buddhify** – whole wheel of sleep related meditations.
- **Insight timer** – choice for sleep , ie evening wind-down
- **YouTube** – many different sleep meditations, body scans, visualisations,
- Sleep Diary
- Sleepful – free CBT sleep programme

# Sleepful – Free sleep assessment and guided support to improve sleep.



The screenshot shows the top section of the Sleepful website. At the top right, there is a navigation menu with links: "Download the App", "Contact Us", "About Sleepful", "Meet the Team", and "Login" with a dropdown arrow. On the left side, the "Sleepful" logo is displayed in a large, white, rounded font with a blue outline, set against a light blue cloud graphic. Below the logo, the tagline "Helping you Sleep" is written in a smaller, white, rounded font. To the right of the logo, the main heading "Effective Treatment for Insomnia" is shown in white, followed by the subtext "Start sleeping better, start feeling better". At the bottom of this section, there are two buttons: a white button with a blue outline labeled "Sleep Assessment" and a solid orange button labeled "Sign Up".

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## Sleepful

Helping you Sleep

### Effective Treatment for Insomnia

Start sleeping better, start feeling better

Sleep Assessment Sign Up