**HAVING SLEEP PROBLEMS?**

Maybe you’re finding it hard to go to sleep? Waking in the night or early morning? Feeling tired and irritable? Most people experience some sleep problems during their lifetime.

Some of the causes of sleeplessness are quite easy to rectify by changing your sleep habits and aspects of your lifestyle, so here are some tips:

* Routine is important, so go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even if you’ve just had a bad night
* Relax at least 1 hour before bed in whatever way works for you
* Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet and the temperature is right, as a warm bed in a cool room works best
* Make sure your mattress, pillows and covers are comfortable
* Exercise regularly during the day.

Things to avoid because they can disrupt sleep are:

* Watching exciting television or using devices with bright screens, which can make you more alert and awake
* Exercising within 4 hours of bedtime as you need to wind down
* Eating a big meal late at night
* Drinking tea or coffee within 6 hours of bedtime
* Having a nap during the day as that will make your less sleepy at night
* Smoking or drinking alcohol in the evening.

If lifestyle changes don’t help, your pharmacist can advise you on sleeping aids which contain natural ingredients such as valerian or lavender and can provide short-term help.

Stress, anxiety and depression can often cause sleeplessness, and the covid 19 pandemic hasn’t helped. If your difficulty continues for more than a few weeks it’s time to get help from your GP, who will try to find out what’s causing it so that you get the right treatment.

*Sent by Drs Virmani and Bedi’s patient participation group*