

Are you lacking sleep?

Words Dr Anneliese Tepper and Lucy Johnston (clinical exercise physiologists, nutrition/Bowen therapist)

QUALITY sleep is as important as nutrition or exercise in maintaining overall health.

So it's surprising that almost 50 per cent of Australians are not getting enough sleep.

Adequate sleep balances biological health, mental wellbeing, and improves our immune system.

It helps us regulate and control our emotions and improves our memory and overall decision-making. With prolonged inadequate sleep we become accident prone, less productive and experience increased fatigue and health problems.

You might be sleep deprived if you have a reliance on alarms, feel sleepy while driving, are addicted to caffeine or other stimulants, make mistakes, are forgetful, feel depressed or uptight, or are frequently sick.

Although everyone is different, seven to nine hours of complete sleep is essential for adults.

Humans' in-built biological clock cycles 24 hourly, regulating the body's sleep/wake cycle, body temperature, alertness levels and hormone release.

Your natural sleep/wake cycle is stimulated by chemicals released in response to daylight and darkness.

Three levels of sleep: light, deep and REM, should be passed through nightly.

During deep sleep, the body is restored through cell repair. When stressed, our bodies do not experience deep sleep.

During REM, the brain completes complex tasks including organising information and ideas, processing new learning, and storing long-term memories.

Two hours of sleep time should be in REM but, if overall sleep is limited, we lose our REM, thus affecting our high-performance functioning and productivity levels.

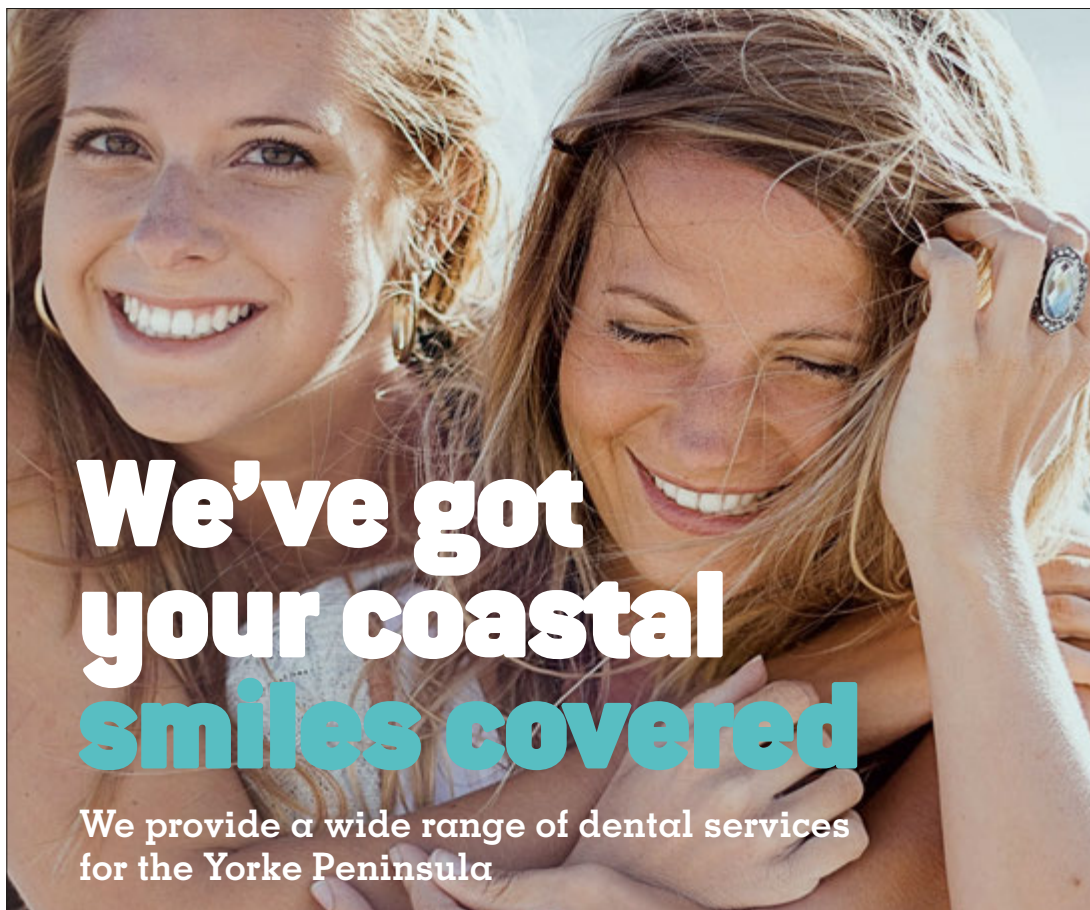
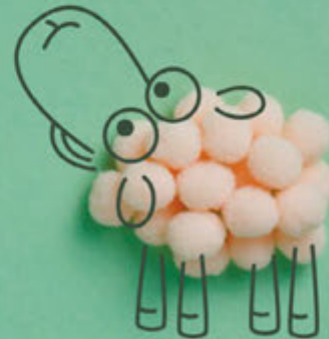
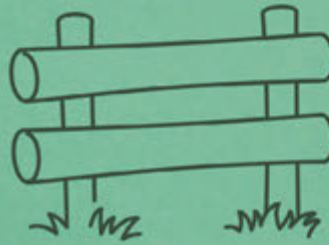
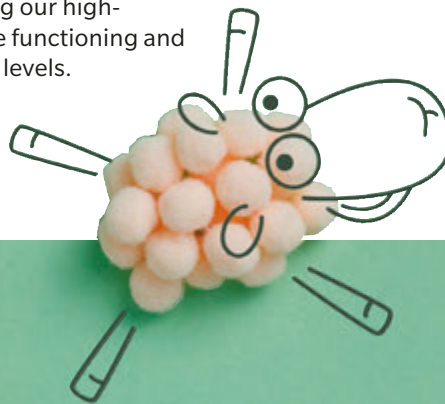
Your doctor might help you identify the prevalence of risk factors driving poor sleep and encourage a sleep diary to identify patterns or identify and address underlying medical conditions like obstructive sleep apnoea and mental health conditions that affect sleep quality.

They may also be able to investigate with sleep studies, refer you to an exercise physiologist for advice or to a psychologist for cognitive behavioural therapy or discuss a short-term script for sleeping tablets.

Allied health professional might also help through improving your sleep hygiene, including recommending the creation of a cool environment, and meditation/mindfulness/breath work to slow heart rate and nervous system.

They may also help reduce and resolve external stressors and recommend regular exercise, limiting noise and liquid intake.

Reducing your electronic device use two hours before sleep will also help, so will limiting caffeine, alcohol and nicotine for three to four hours before bed, and adding healthy foods to your diet. ■



We've got your coastal smiles covered

We provide a wide range of dental services for the Yorke Peninsula



National Dental Care Kadina

8821 2899

70 Graves Street Kadina, SA 5554
nationaldentalcare.com.au

ALL HEALTH FUNDS WELCOME. PREFERRED FUNDS:

