

Sequences of Sleep

There are two main types of sleep –

- Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep
- Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) sleep

Sleep cycle -

- Stage 1 – 5-10 minutes, very light sleep, can be woken easily. Transition to sleep.
- Stage 2 – 20 minutes, body temperature drops, heart rate slows. 50 per cent of sleep in this stage.
- Stage 3 – muscles relax, blood pressure and breathing rate drop, deepest sleep. Non-responsive, difficult to wake. Transition to REM.
- REM sleep – brain more active, body is relaxed and immobilised, eye move rapidly, dreams occur. 20 per cent of sleep in this stage.

Sleep does not always follow these stages in order.

Generally it follows this sequence:-

Stage 1 -> Stage 2 -> Stage 3 -> Stage 2 -> REM -> Stage 2

The first REM usually happens about 90 minutes after we fall asleep.

REM periods become longer as sleep goes on – can last up to an hour.