

Irish sleep proverb key to good health

The saying goes ‘a good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything’ and according to Te Whatu Ora Sleep Specialist, this old Irish proverb rings true.

Nic Frame, a Clinical Sleep Physiologist at the Dunedin Public Hospital, says while sleep is still quite mysterious, it is crucial to our wellbeing and survival.

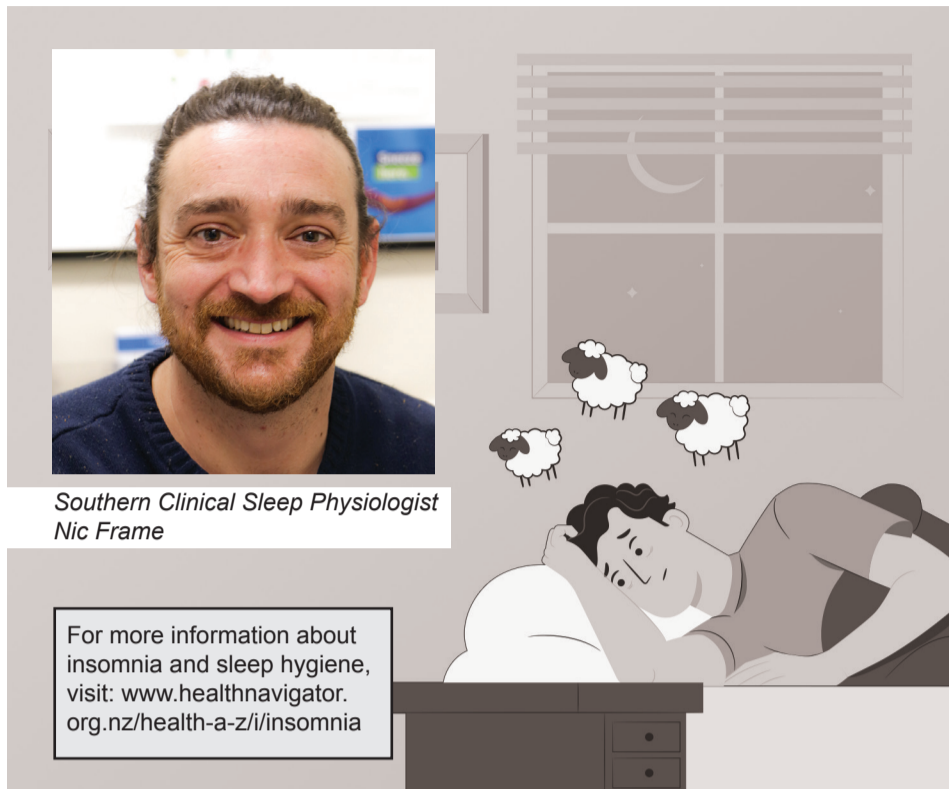
“We know chronic sleep deprivation is associated with a lot of poor health outcomes including increased risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and depression/anxiety,” says Nic.

“Even one night of sleep deprivation leads to a spike in stress hormones the next day, which can have an impact on many things like mood,

concentration and appetite. In other words, it becomes harder to be patient and kind, do our jobs efficiently, and we crave KFC for dinner.”

While easier said than done, making sleep a priority is the most valuable piece of advice the Sleep Physiologist can offer.

“This can be really hard to do, especially when we live in a busy-centric world,” says Nic. “Winding down is really important – turn off your email notifications, try to reduce your alcohol and caffeine intake, and keep screen time to a minimum an hour or so before bed. Insomnia is a common problem amongst the health workforce and there’s some great resources online to help.”



*Southern Clinical Sleep Physiologist
Nic Frame*

For more information about insomnia and sleep hygiene, visit: www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/i/insomnia



Walk-in vaccinations are available at the Dunedin Immunisation Centre on Hanover Street 6 days a week (Saturday to Thursday). Photo credit Gregor Richardson, ODT

COVID-19 booster your best bet

“Immunity from two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine decreases over time so it is important to top up our defences,” Southern COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Lead Karl Metzler says.

“A booster helps reduce your chances of serious illness and hospitalisation, which will also reduce the pressure on our health services.”

If you are aged 18 or over, you are eligible for a booster 3 months after your last dose, and if you are 16-17 you are eligible for a booster 6 months after your last dose.

A second booster is recommended for those at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, a minimum

of 6 months after a first booster. This includes people aged 65 and over, Māori and Pasifika aged 50 and over, and immunocompromised people.

“Even if you have had COVID-19, you should still get vaccinated to give you the best protection because we don’t know how long your natural immunity will protect you against getting it again, or getting another variant,” Metzler says.

You should wait 3 months after recovery from COVID-19 before getting a COVID-19 vaccination.

Find a vaccination clinic near you, including those offering walk-in vaccinations, on our website: www.southernhealth.nz/COVID19/clinics

Stepping into steel-capped boots

“I grew up playing with Lego, it was my favourite thing to do,” says Bridget Dickson, New Dunedin Hospital’s Programme Director.

“I’ve always had a strong interest in building and architecture. If I’d been a boy, I probably would have been an engineer – but in the 70s and 80s, opportunities like that weren’t necessarily promoted to girls.”

With her interests in maths, science and the great outdoors, Bridget was drawn to physiotherapy instead.

“Really, a human body is made up of levers and pulleys – so physiotherapy used my engineering and physics brain. And my family always had a strong ethos about physical activity and getting outside, so physiotherapy aligned with my core values.”

After graduating, a fixed-term role at Wakari became a permanent job, and

then a rotational, and then a senior position.

Bridget joined a New Dunedin Hospital user group in 2017 – and when COVID-19 hit, she had the opportunity to step into previous Programme Director Hamish Brown’s steel-capped shoes.

Bridget says there’s a growing presence of diversity in health infrastructure, but there are still times when she’s the only woman around the table. Bridget’s advice for anyone who doesn’t fit the typical leadership mould is to back yourself.

“Take a deep breath, and remember you probably know more than you think. You have the ability – even if you’re not wearing a check shirt.”

By backing herself, Bridget’s engineered herself into her dream role.



*Programme Director New Dunedin Hospital
Bridget Dickson*

ARTIST IMPRESSION ONLY

Eyes on the prize



Mel Peck Clinical Coordinator/Nurse Injector, Maj Guevarra Nurse Injector, Charm Lazaro Nurse Injector, Yana Yeritsyan Nurse Injector, and Dr Sheng Hong

As we prepare for our new digital hospital, teams and departments are being asked to empower staff to work at the top of their scope.

Dr Sheng Chiong Hong says our Ophthalmology Outpatients team is leading the charge, with nurses now delivering sight-saving procedures traditionally performed by doctors.

“We use an injection called Avastin that saves sight about 95% of the time,” says Dr Hong. “It inhibits a specific chemical in the eye, meaning we can target disease very specifically. It’s effective for eye problems such as macular degeneration and complications from diabetes.

“Previously if you got a diagnosis of macular degeneration, we’d have sent you to the Blind Foundation. But things have changed dramatically because of the availability of these medications.”

The Eye Clinic has been using the injection since 2006.

“We gave less than a dozen injections in the first year – now we give at least 100 a week. Injections are given monthly, treatment can be indefinite, and with an ageing population, these degenerative conditions are getting more prevalent. So the numbers are still growing.”

Initially GPs were trained up to deliver the injections in Christchurch, but with demand constantly rising, the GP model wasn’t sustainable. Taking the lead from the UK and Auckland, we started training our nurses instead.

“They know the department, they know the anatomy of the eye, and they know all the very specific medical terms that we use in ophthalmology. So it makes sense to train nurses.”

There’s currently no waiting list for injections – and the team wants to keep it that way.

“We’ve now got a good team of nurse injectors to deliver the service,” says Dr Hong. “Our goal is to continue to

meet the demand, because critical treatments that are sight-saving should not be delayed. Delivering these injections is one of our highest priorities.”

Nurses now provide about 80% of the Avastin injection service, and Clinical coordinator/Nurse Injector Melanie Peck says there are plans to continue to grow the capability of the nurses in the department.

“Our first nurse injector, Liane Matthews, has been appointed Clinical Nurse Specialist, and she’ll be delivering nurse-led clinics in other areas of ophthalmology. And we’ve got other ideas for professional development. It keeps nurses engaged in their specialty.”

Visiting our hospitals – what you need to know



Wear a mask

All staff, patients, and visitors to Te Whatu Ora Southern facilities over the age of 8 years old still need to wear a surgical face mask. This includes when in common areas, lifts and elevators, and in wards. Visitors with mask exemptions will not be admitted entry.

They should also be worn:

- By inpatients where practicable/ sensible
- When patients are moving through common/shared spaces

We ask visitors to continue to practice hand hygiene.



Physical distancing

Please keep 1.5 metres from people when possible in our hospitals. Keep 1 metre apart in controlled environments like workplaces where practicable.

In the hospital cafeteria / café please comply with the 1.5 metre rule and do not rearrange seating, Please wear your mask when you’re not eating.



Visitors to wards

- A maximum of two registered visitors for the patient’s entire admission.
- Only one of the two registered visitors can visit a day.
- Charge Nurse Manager/Midwife Manager/Unit Managers may make exceptions or further restrictions to this rule.



Visitors to outpatient appointments and ambulatory care (walk-ins)

Only one support person who has been screened and approved by the relevant outpatient area may attend.

Some wards have special visiting guidelines. Please contact a ward directly to confirm visiting.

To stop the spread of infection

DO NOT enter our hospitals if you have: a cough, a sore throat, a runny nose, sneezing, aches, diarrhoea, vomiting or a fever. Our job is to protect patients and staff from illness. **You will be screened upon entry.**

For further information about visiting our hospitals, please visit: www.southernhealth.nz/COVID19/hospital-services