

## *Journey to the Land of Nod*

### Why do we sleep?

Sleep is restorative, it allows growth and rejuvenation of our nervous system, immune system, and musculo-skeletal system, it facilitates our short term memory, yet scientists are still largely uncertain why sleep is so vitally important to all animals.

Several theories have been proposed. Sleep may be evolutionary to keep us out of danger at night time. Sleep may help us conserve energy for the daytime, when we are more efficient. At a molecular level, adenosine – a by-product of our brains' activity - accumulates during the day and is cleared by sleep. Finally, the brain plasticity theory states that the structure and organisation of our brain is altered by sleep, allowing us to consolidate new information and learn.

### What happens in sleep?

Our brains do not stop their work when we fall asleep. Instead, we fall into a cycle of three phases of progressively deeper Non-REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep, and REM sleep in which dreams occur. During REM sleep, the brain may be more active than in its' waking state! Our skeletal muscles are inhibited to prevent us from hurting ourselves while acting out our REM dreams. Most parasomnias (sleep walking, sleep talking, sleep driving etc) actually occur in deep phases of non-REM sleep.

Our sleep drive is regulated deep within our brains, where arousal centres compete with sleep centres to keep us alert or send us to sleep. These centres are directly influenced by external light sources via the optic nerve, which is how we can (usually) maintain a circadian rhythm, alert during the light of day and asleep when it gets dark.

### What happened to my sleep!?

Many elderly people have significantly poorer quality sleep than they once did. The reasons for this are numerable. Chronic pain may keep you awake at night. Chronic cardiac and respiratory conditions may interfere with the quality of your sleep. Your bladder may have you getting out of bed many times in a night. While these issues are the forte of your GP or specialist, it is nice to know that there are some causes of sleep disturbance which can be easily reversed.

**Stimulants** - That nice cup of coffee before bedtime may not only be hampering your efforts to get to sleep, caffeine also causes your kidney to make more fluid and stimulates your bladder. The result being that after you finally get to sleep you'll be up for a toilet trip in no time!

**Alcohol** - Some people enjoy a nip of brandy before bed to help them sleep, but in reality, while alcohol may send you off quicker to the land of nod, the sleep you get will be poor in quality and be interrupted by frequent awakenings.





# Volunteers

**Napping** - While a daytime nap can be useful to repay a sleep debt from the night before, too long a nap may leave you feeling groggy and a nap too late in the day may interfere with your sleep that night. If you enjoy a daytime nap, it is recommended that you take no more than 20 minutes, and not within 3 hours of bedtime.

**Exercise** – Like napping, exercise should be taken early in the day or it may hamper your sleep. However, too little physical activity during the day can leave you wide awake at bedtime.

**Being indoors** – our bodies are tuned into the environment and respond to dwindling sunlight by turning down our level of alertness. Staying inside all day, out of the sun can confuse our bodies and interfere with this natural pattern. Getting 15 minutes of sunlight on your skin each day can not only keep your vitamin D level in check, but together with sunlight pouring through wide opened curtains during the daylight hours when you must be indoors, it can also help you sleep!

For further information about sleep and how to get more, visit;

Division of Sleep Medicine  
at Harvard Medical School and WGBH  
Educational Foundation

<http://healthysleep.med.harvard.edu/healthy/>

Are always welcome and appreciated. If anyone is interested please contact reception to discuss. Residents look forward to these visits, especially the company and conversations.

**Currently, the following volunteers bring their various skills and attributes to Ardmillan Place;**

Anne O'Brien visits weekly to chat with residents.

Rowland D'Cruze regularly brings his organ along for a sing-a-long, which everyone enjoys.

Students from St. Kevin's Boys School and Penleigh Essendon College Community Program visit on Wednesday afternoons (except on school holidays).

Various Church Groups visit on Sunday mornings. Doug Carr and his group frequently bring prayer and worship to Ardmillan Place.

Marta continues to give her time to our Tuesday afternoon craft group.



**Just a reminder ...** for residents to always sign out whenever they leave the premises and to sign back in upon returning.

Guests should sign in and out at the books available at reception on each level.



## Brain Teaser

Mr Brown from out of town had booked himself into a hotel and just couldn't get to sleep. After hours of tossing and turning, Mr Brown finally picked up his telephone receiver, dialled a number, hung up, then promptly fell asleep. How???

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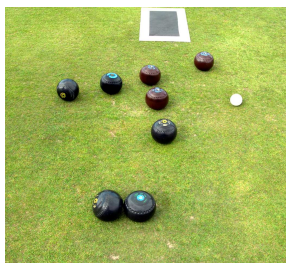
# Activities & Events

## Recent Events at Ardmillan



Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> January was **Australia Day**. A BBQ and drinks were enjoyed on the terrace in celebration of our beautiful home and our achievements here since the arrival of the first fleet in 1788.

Residents on level 5 West competed in a **Carpet Bowls Tournament** on the 5th of February.



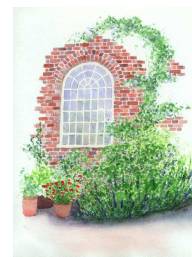
The 14th February was **St Valentine's Day**, a date that has been celebrated since the middle ages, when it was noted that on the feast day of St Valentine in England and France, birds began to pair and love seemed to blossom. Residents on 5 West had a Valentine's themed craft session with Tom for the occasion.

### For the Diary

A residents and relatives meeting will be held on Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> March from 2pm to 3pm in the level 4 dining room. This is a chance to raise any questions you may have or voice your feedback.



**Bunnings Hardware** was back at Ardmillan Place in February. Residents spent time decorating pots for a gardening workshop which was run by the Bunnings DIY team.



**Music Afternoons** continue to keep Ardmillan Place resonating with old time favourites and sing-a-longs. Special thanks to Rowland for making them such a lively occasion!

"An Afternoon at the Movies" takes place every week on the big screen on



Tuesday and Friday afternoons for residents on 5 West and 4/5 East respectively.

Marta and Anne continue to bring their expertise to the Tuesday afternoon **Craft group** for residents to unleash the creativity within.



**Exercise Program** - Stretch your legs with us every morning for an hour. Commences at 11 am on Level 4 and 5.





# Birthdays

We wish a **very happy birthday** to the following residents who have celebrated their birthdays in February and March.

**February** – Giovanna Montalti (1<sup>st</sup>) Pat Little (7<sup>th</sup>) Antonio Giuliano (10<sup>th</sup>) Mabel Scott (13<sup>th</sup>) Percy Gogerley (15<sup>th</sup>) James Allan (20<sup>th</sup>), Stella Schiavello (23<sup>rd</sup>) Anne Busch (24<sup>th</sup>) Hazel Cullen and John Dixon (26<sup>th</sup>)

**March** – Ray Williams and Loren Smith (2<sup>nd</sup>) Wendy Reid (3<sup>rd</sup>) Ray Dowle (5<sup>th</sup>) Edith Chmielnik (6<sup>th</sup>) Joan Fitzgerald and Rex Johnstone (8<sup>th</sup>) Lorna MacKinlay (11<sup>th</sup>) Leslie Trickey (12<sup>th</sup>) Des Scully (13<sup>th</sup>) Phyllis King (14<sup>th</sup>) Mary Trussler and David Hughes (23<sup>rd</sup>) Elva Pattinson (28<sup>th</sup>)

## Answer to Brain Teaser

He couldn't go to sleep because the man next door snored. Brown rang snorer's room - the phone number corresponding to the room number - and woke him up. When the noise stopped, Mr. Brown had no trouble in dozing off.

## In the News...

### Driving Miss Ada

An elderly woman has inspired a new reality TV show to take place in Western Australia this year.



In 1930, 68 year old Ada Beal, her nurse, and an elderly friend hailed a taxi cab in Geelong. Their destination? Darwin, NT. The heiress-spinster wished to escape the Victorian winter, and to prove that women were quite capable of undertaking the overland journey. Twelve weeks and 7480 kilometres later, the trio were 300 pounds (or \$15000 AUD today) out of pocket, but what a story to tell!

A taxi driver will be chosen through public vote to escort a lucky traveller and a friend through the varied landscape of WA, playing tour guide and sharing anecdotes along the way.



### The Great Weight Debate

Recent research from the University of Western Australia suggests that overweight people over the age of

70 experience enhanced longevity compared to their friends who are in the "normal" weight range. Professor of Geriatric Medicine, Leon Flicker, noted this was particularly true for deaths due to common causes such as cancer, heart disease, and chronic respiratory disease. However, before chowing down on chips and cake in front of the telly, remember that tipping the scales from overweight into obesity puts you back into the same risk category as those of normal weight, while being very obese, or leading a

sedentary lifestyle puts you in the highest risk category. The research suggests that keeping moving is more important for your health than obsessing over calories and the number on the scales.