



OT ADVICE WEIGHTED BLANKET SAFETY GUIDELINES

Background

- Weighted blankets have been identified as an effective source of deep pressure sensory input, which for many people will have a calming effect and enhance their ability to get to sleep and to stay asleep.
- Blanket should weigh no more than 10% of the user's body weight.
- **Please consult your doctor if there is any medical condition (where the application of weight or pressure is contraindicated) that may be affected by the use of the weighted blanket.**

Do ...

- Adjust the user's clothing to accommodate for the increased temperature the weighted item provides.
- Put the blanket in place whilst user is awake, allow time for the user to adjust to the 'feel' of the blanket, and allow opportunity for the user to report on comfort/discomfort. If the user is not able to report as above, observe and note non-verbal cues that may indicate comfort/discomfort;
- Observe the user, and discontinue use if signs of sweatiness, pallor, breathlessness, discomfort or agitation.
- Use with caution for people who are at risk of moving down the bed, and being caught underneath the blanket.
- Assess the user's ability to move out from under the blanket, and to throw the blanket off if required.
- On initial nights of using the blanket, make regular checks on the user during their sleep, to note signs as above. Remove the blanket once the user is asleep.
- Repeat the precautionary actions when the user is unwell, and in changing seasons (eg from winter to summer) to ensure continued safety and suitability for the user.

Don't

- Don't cover the user's face or head with the weighted blanket.
- Don't use weighted items with a person with breathing problems, difficulty regulating blood pressure, skin rash, open wounds, acute illness, fever, fragile skin or problems with circulation.
- Don't leave the blanket on all night. Remove it once the user is asleep.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of the weighted blanket, please contact your occupational therapist.

Reference: Sue McCabe & Caris Jalla, Wake Up to Learn More Project Report May 2010, The Centre for Cerebral Palsy

Suggested Use:

- Use the blanket at story time or quiet time across the child's lap to check they are comfortable



THE SPARK
THERAPY SERVICES
Explore • Play • Discover • Connect

- Check to see if they are able to move the blanket off by themselves.
- If they are comfortable using the blanket, use it at bed time as they are settling to sleep, check they are comfortable and can move it off if the need to.
- Observe your child and discontinue use if signs of sweatiness, pallor, breathlessness, discomfort or agitation.
- If the child is comfortable, the blanket can stay on until they fall asleep. Do not leave the blanket on all night.

Tina Bruce - OT

Please call if you have any questions regarding the information above.