

# Getting Good Sleep Is Important

**A** good night's sleep affects much more than how you feel the next day. With age, it's not uncommon for sleep habits to change. Most seniors notice they are ready to fall asleep earlier in the evening and wake up at later hours.

As we age, our bodies produce less melatonin, which can lead to slight disruptions throughout the night.

However, if you experience disturbed sleep, are tired when you wake up or experience other aspects of insomnia, there may be serious underlying issues.

Learn more information regarding your sleeping patterns and if you should visit a specialist, from the American Geriatrics Society.

## COMMON SLEEP PROBLEMS IN SENIORS

Problems with sleep can lead to numerous issues for older adults. Here are a few of the most common types they experience.

**Insomnia:** a condition which causes you not to fall asleep when you think you should, causes you to stay asleep or gives the feeling you have not slept enough once you wake up.

**Sleep apnea:** a condition that may cause seniors to stop breathing during sleep. A lack of oxygen causes some to wake up gasping for air. This condition may lead to diseases such as high blood pressure and heart conditions.

**Restless Leg Syndrome:** a condition that causes people to repetitively kick their legs during sleep. While it may not wake you up, it's likely your legs will be sore in the morning and it will affect your comfort and ability to rest.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Your actions throughout the day can play a huge role in how well you sleep. Take the advice from the group Health in Aging to set yourself up for a full night's rest.

- Avoid caffeine, tobacco and alcohol in the later part of the day;
- Eat smaller portions before bedtime;
- Follow a strict sleep schedule and routine; and
- Exercise regularly, especially early in the day.

## REACH OUT FOR HELP

If you have tried to make yourself tired and are still having difficulty sleeping, visiting a specialist is the next step. Through tests and studies, they can find what is keeping you awake.

They may choose cognitive-behavioral therapy, medical management or sometimes prescription medicine to help you get a better night's sleep.



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