



Sleep

Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute

COSCO

Revised September 2020

Why Is Sleep Important?

- Emotional Well Being
 - Improves mood
 - Decreases depression
 - Decreases agitation
- Mental Well Being
 - Improves concentration
 - Improves memory
- Physical Well Being
 - Promotes healing
 - Reduces blood pressure
 - Builds immune system
 - Reduces fatigue

Signs of Sleep Difficulties

In the morning . . .

- difficulty getting up and ready
- feeling unrefreshed

During the day . . .

- feeling drowsy
- frequent yawning
- requiring naps

At Night . . .

- falling asleep before going to bed
- taking a long time to fall asleep
- waking frequently during the night
- waking very early and not being able to go back to sleep
- snoring, gasping, choking
- stopping breathing

About Sleeping & Aging

People believe that as we age, we require less sleep. In fact, most seniors require 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

Normal Changes as We Age

- Seniors shift towards going to sleep earlier and getting up earlier.
- They wake more easily during the night.
- They feel less energized after sleep.

Types of Insomnia

- Transient: Lasting days or a week or two
- Short-Term: Lasting several weeks
- Chronic: Lasting months to years

Sleep Disorders

- Obstructive Sleep Apnea
 - Breathing temporarily stops during sleep.
 - Treatment: CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) therapy, weight loss
- Restless Leg Syndrome
 - Unpleasant leg sensations that disrupt sleep
 - Treatment: medication
- Advanced Sleep Phase Disorder
 - Falling asleep and waking at unusually early times

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Sleep Hygiene

Sleep Hygiene is the circumstances, routines and habits that affect how well you sleep.

Poor Sleep Hygiene

- Drinking caffeine late in the day.
- Smoking, especially close to bedtime.
- Drinking fluids right before bed.
- Making plans or working out problems while in bed.
- Worrying about not being able to fall asleep.
- Consuming alcohol before bed.
- Eating large meals late at night.
- Exercising right before bed.
- Watching TV in bed.
- Using computers, tablets, cell phones, etc. before bed.
- Napping more than 20 minutes during the day.

Good Sleep Hygiene

- Waking up at the same time each day.
- Sleeping in a comfortable bed.
- Ensuring the room is dark, quiet, and a comfortable temperature.
- Using the bed only for sexual activity and sleep.
- Going to bed only when you are somewhat tired.

Tips for a Better Sleep

- Practicing good sleep hygiene.
- Exercising regularly.
- Eating a balanced diet.
- Getting some sunlight every day.
- Doing a calming activity right before bed.

What Else Can Be Done?

Professional Help

- Consult a family doctor if sleep difficulties persist longer than two weeks.
- Keep a log of sleep and activities to show your doctor.

Prescription Medications

- can be habit-forming
- use only as a last resort
- take at the lowest dose possible for the shortest time possible
- effects can last into the next day

Natural Sleep Products

- Melatonin can be effective for changing daily sleep patterns; however, it is not recommended for insomnia except for people who are melatonin deficient.
- Botanically-based products such as chamomile, valerian, and lavender have not been researched enough to prove their effectiveness.
- Magnesium may help reduce leg-cramping.

Psychological Treatments

- Cognitive therapy
- Sleep restriction
- Relaxation

Resources

Canadian Sleep Society

Phone: 514-509-2113

Web: css-scs.ca

Sleep Disorder Brochures

Web: css-scs.ca/resources/brochures

How to get a good night's sleep without medication [from Geriatric Health and Aging, University of Montreal Hospital]

Web:

www.criugm.qc.ca/fichier/pdf/Sleep_brochure.pdf

National Sleep Foundation (US) Sleep Facts & Information

Web:

www.sleepfoundation.org/primary-links/how-sleep-works

National Sleep Foundation (US)

Web: sleepfoundation.org

Sleepwell

Web: mysleepwell.ca

Information to help people manage insomnia without relying on sleeping pills.

More About Sleep Apnea

Loud snoring, especially when it's accompanied by daytime fatigue, may be a sign of sleep apnea, a common and potentially serious disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts as you sleep. Untreated sleep apnea can be dangerous and detrimental to your health, so it's important to see a doctor if you suspect that you or a loved one might have it.

What happens: Sleep apnea affects the way you breathe when you're sleeping. In untreated sleep apnea, breathing is briefly interrupted or becomes very shallow during sleep. These breathing pauses typically last between 10 to 20 seconds and can occur up to hundreds of times a night, jolting you out of your natural sleep rhythm.

Consequences: you spend more time in light sleep and less time in the deep, restorative sleep you need to be energetic, mentally sharp, and productive the next day. The chronic sleep deprivation that comes with sleep apnea results in daytime sleepiness, slow reflexes, poor concentration, and an increased risk of accidents. Sleep apnea can also lead to serious health problems over time, including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and weight gain.

Treatment: with treatment you can control the symptoms, get your sleep back on track, and start enjoying being refreshed and alert every day.

