

Tips for Dealing with Insomnia in the Elderly



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As we age, we often experience normal changes in our sleeping patterns. Disturbed sleep, waking up tired everyday and other symptoms of insomnia are not a normal part of aging. These tips can help you overcome age - related sleep problems and get a good night's rest.

Insomnia and Aging

Tip 1: Understand how sleep changes as you age :-

A good night's sleep is important because it helps improve concentration and memory formation, allows your body to repair any cell damage, refreshes your immune system to help prevent disease. Most healthy adults require 7 and a half to 9 hours of sleep to function at his/her best. As you age, your body produces lower levels of growth hormone, so you'll experience a decrease in deep sleep. So, you produce less melatonin, i.e. you'll often experience more fragmented sleep (more rapid sleep cycles) and more awakenings between sleep cycles. As your circadian rhythm (the internal clock that tells you when to sleep and when to

wake up) changes, you may find yourself wanting to go to sleep earlier in the evening and waking up earlier in the morning.

Tip 2: Identify underlying problems :-

While emotional issues such as stress, anxiety, depression can cause insomnia, the most common causes in seniors are a poor sleep environment, and poor sleep and daytime habits, pain or medical illness, medications, lack of exercise, psychological stress and sleep disorders (snoring, sleep apnea).

Tip 3: Improve sleep habits :-

Improve daytime habits for better sleep and take care of your body - be engaged in activity, improve your mood, find someone you can talk to, preferably face - to - face, about your problems and worries, exercise regularly and expose yourself to sunlight for at least 2 hours a day. Keep curtains open during the day. Limit caffeine after 4pm and limit alcohol and nicotine. Do not have a big spicy meal late in the evening. Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, cool and your

bed is comfortable. Try using a sleep mask and use your bedroom and bed only for sleep. Move bedroom clocks out of view and sleep only at night, no day-time naps. Keep a regular bedtime routine for better sleep. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday. Have a bath or routine of washing face and brushing teeth. When in bed think of nice things. Do a relaxing breathing exercise. Go to bed earlier. Develop bedtime rituals like playing music, relaxation techniques. Limit your use of sleeping pills.

To know more about Tips for Dealing with Insomnia in the Elderly contact Geriatric Clinic

The Geriatric Clinic is located at
**3rd floor, Health Check Department,
Hinduja Clinic Building**
Timing - **Thursday - 9.30 am to 11.30 am**
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