

Balanced Living – September 2020

How You Can Get a Better Night's Sleep



Despite common belief, aging doesn't cause sleep problems, and seniors don't need less sleep as they grow older.

Most older people sleep poorly, or not long enough, because of ailments associated with aging, such as arthritis, physical disabilities, respiratory problems, and depression.

Lack of exercise, heart disease, anxiety, stress, and menopause also can disrupt sleep, and many medications seniors take can cause insomnia.

Changing patterns

"Many people believe that sleeping poorly is just part of growing old. In fact, seniors who fall asleep during the day do so because they aren't getting enough quality sleep at night," says Sonia Ancoli-Israel, M.D., director of the Sleep Disorders Clinic at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Medical Center in California.

Though the need for eight hours of sleep each night doesn't change with age, sleep patterns do. The body's circadian rhythm, a biological clock that controls sleep, naturally advances a few hours as a person grows older. When that happens, older people may feel sleepy earlier in the evening and wake up earlier in the morning. By observing their natural sleep patterns and making lifestyle changes, seniors can help keep their internal clocks on time and overcome sleep problems.

Sleep remedies

Sleep and aging experts agree that one's daytime activities and sleep environment are critical to getting a good night's sleep.

Try the following remedies if you have trouble sleeping.

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications could be disturbing your sleep.
- Stay active. Maintain a moderate level of daily activity and do gentle exercise.
- Spend some time outdoors during daylight hours. Sunlight can help set your biological clock.
- Pay attention to what you eat and drink in the evening. Consuming foods and drinks that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea or cola can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages in the evening. They can make you fall asleep faster, but they cause early morning awakenings and fitful sleep.
- Don't smoke. Smokers are more likely to have trouble sleeping than nonsmokers.
- Make sure your bedroom is dark, quiet, and cool.
- Replace your mattress if it's lumpy, sagging or worn out. A comfortable mattress that offers good support can help you fall asleep and stay asleep.
- Ask a doctor for help if your partner snores or has an illness that disturbs your sleep.

The StayWell Company, LLC © 2020

Did You Know?

There are thousands of health videos that educate on topics from allergies to getting your zzzzs.

[Log-in to explore these resources...](#)

Please access our free September Educational Webinar:

“Fixing Our Broken Sleep”

Presented by Rick Clerici

In this webinar, you will learn techniques for overcoming common sleep problems like "trouble falling asleep", "difficulty staying asleep", "excessive thinking", "waking too early", "Sunday night insomnia", "chronic insomnia" "shift-work difficulties" and "daytime sleepiness". You will hear about the latest population studies and the latest scientific discoveries of the foundational relationship between sleep and all areas of health. This hands-on presentation has helped many people to begin getting better sleep almost immediately. Guided relaxation exercises teach techniques for initiating sleep and returning to sleep. Please go to www.espyr.com to view this webinar. Log in using our password, click on “webinars” and select the featured webinar.

“Please feel free to submit questions relevant to the webinar throughout the month. The subject matter expert will answer these questions and they will be posted alongside the webinar recording. The questions and answers will be a permanent part of the webinar archive to which you will have access.”

Our webinars now have an enhanced process. Each month, the webinars are released in a recorded format and users may submit relevant questions throughout the month. All answers are posted alongside the recording by the subject matter expert. This new process allows all participants the convenience of watching the webinar **“on demand”** any time after publication.

For additional online information and resources about maintaining well-being and wellness as well as trainings and self-searches for child and eldercare resources, please go to www.espyr.com and log in using your password. If you do not know your password, please send an email to password@espyr.com and include the name of your employer.