



SIU MEDICINE

DALE & DEBORAH SMITH CENTER
FOR ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH
& TREATMENT

SLEEP HYGIENE

HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY BRAIN

Sleep is a vital part to everyone's health, but for those with dementia, it's often tougher to get the seven to nine hours that adults need every night. Not only with awakenings become more frequent during the night, but falling asleep can be much more difficult as well. Here are some habits to help ensure a better night's sleep:

DURING THE DAY

- Reduce, or eliminate caffeine intake (coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, chocolate, diet pills, some over the counter supplements, prescription and non-prescription medications that contain caffeine).
- Limit caffeinated beverages to no more than three cups up to 10 a.m. each day and do not use caffeine after noon.
- Avoid daytime naps.
- Expose yourself to sunlight (the brightest light) each day by walking outside, sitting by a window or using a light box.
- Exercise daily, but not within four hours of going to bed.

BEFORE BEDTIME

- Set a regular sleep schedule by going to bed and awakening at the same time each day, including weekends.
- Avoid drinking liquids within two hours of bedtime.
- Reduce or eliminate nicotine use, especially in the evening (tobacco, some E-cigarettes).
- Avoid alcohol use in the evening or at bedtime. Alcohol may make you sleepy, but it interferes with deep restful sleep later in the night.
- Avoid eating a heavy meal within four hours of bedtime, but do not go to bed hungry. Eating a light snack in the evening before bedtime is OK.

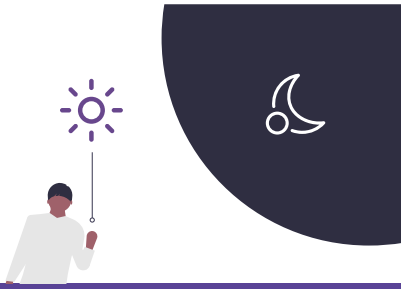


**We're here
to help**

From health and wellness, managing changes, educating family and friends and more, explore our online resource guide for caregivers.

Visit siumed.edu/alzresource or scan the QR code below.





Sundowning

As daylight fades, those with dementia may experience sundowning. Agitation, restlessness, or confusion can begin or worsen in late afternoon or early evening.

Causes of sundowning are not well understood, but some studies suggest the body's biological clock is confused.

Other factors to consider are:

- Hunger or thirst
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Pain or infection
- Boredom



Relaxation scripts to help sleep

Scripts for relaxation may help soothe restlessness or help develop a better sleep routine.

Link: dartmouth.edu/~healthed/relax/downloads.html

A FOCUSED SETTING FOR BETTER SLEEP

- Put aside concerns or worries and relax before going to bed. Practice relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, or guided imagery. Make a list and set a time during the day to resolve concerns or issues to reduce evening anxiety. Engage in relaxing activities one hour before bed time such as a warm bath or light reading.
- Keep the bedroom quiet, cool (not cold), and dark. Avoid exposure to bright lights such as television, computer or other electronic screens when going to sleep.
- Use the bedroom for sex and sleep only.
- Avoid having pets in the bedroom as their activity may interfere with sleep.

NIGHTTIME AGITATION

Waking up in the middle of the night can affect everyone in the home. If a person with dementia wakes up during the night, try to address their source of discomfort. Staying calm and not arguing is important — help guide them back to sleep, but don't force them.

Caregiver's sleep and energy is just as important. If your sleep is constantly disrupted, talk to a clinician for help. Consider, if possible, having a family member or friend provide support for a night as well.

Studies have shown that sleep and dementia have intertwined effects. Poor sleep quality can worsen dementia symptoms, and dementia can disrupt sleep patterns.

SLEEP DISORDERS

Even for those without dementia, sleep disorders increase for older adults. Insomnia, sleep apnea and various movement disorders are all heightened as we age. If you suspect you may have an undiagnosed sleep disorder, talk to a clinician about your concerns.