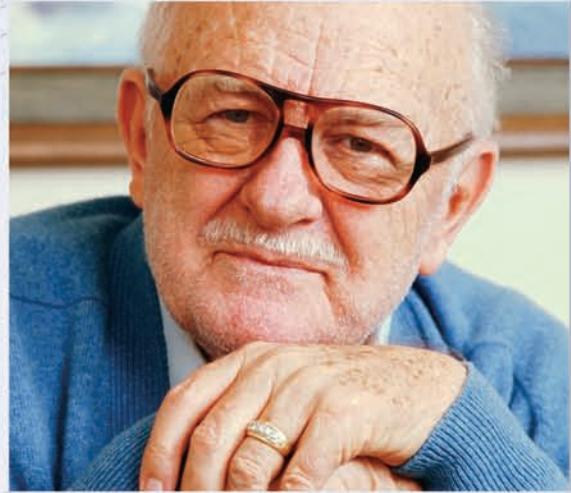


SleepCaptions

Aging & Sleep

Although the same amount of sleep is needed throughout our adult life, changes in sleep patterns occur as a natural part of the aging process. Many adults report sleeping differently after middle age. At a time when the likelihood of illness increases, it may be difficult to distinguish normal sleep from a sleep-related problem.



Normal Sleep Habits in Older People

Older Adults (18-25):

Older men and women need the same amount of sleep as they did throughout their adult years. However, the timing of sleep may shift to an earlier phase of the evening. If it shifts more than two hours, a sleep disorder called Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome may be present.



EDUCATION

SleepMedicine

Do I Have a Sleep Problem?

I feel tired during the day.

I awaken too early in the morning.

I have been told I snore loudly.

I awaken frequently at night because of pain, anxiety, the need to urinate, or other symptoms.

I experience confusion differentiating between day and night.

I have a chronic physical or psychological illness.

I have been told that I snore, grunt or make other noises during sleep.

I feel uncomfortable or "creepy" feelings in the legs or other areas that prevents sleep.

SleepCaptions

Sleep Issues in Older People

The following list, though not comprehensive, describes the most common sleep issues faced by older adults:

Circadian:

Sleep naturally progresses through stages of light then deep sleep, followed by periods of REM or dream sleep. Older people spend less time in the deepest sleep stages of sleep. The production of hormones that regulate the sleep-wake cycle (including melatonin) decreases. As a result, sleep begins and ends at an earlier phase, even though the same amount of sleep is obtained. A severe advance in circadian rhythm (more than two to three hours) could indicate a sleep disorder called Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome (ASPS).

Lifestyle:

Retirement brings about major life changes. A full time job may be exchanged for part-time work or full retirement. Social activities may involve less physical movement. Illness or physical decline may limit the ability to exercise as well. A decrease in physical activity during the day can disrupt nighttime sleep. Retirement often means a less restrictive schedule, making it easier to take long enough naps during the day to disrupt sleep, especially in the context of changing circadian rhythms.

Medication:

Older people are more likely to suffer from physical and mental conditions that disrupt sleep, as well as certain sleep disorders. Frequently, it is the associated pain and discomfort that interferes with sleep. Other disruptive features include breathing difficulties, frequent urination, depression and anxiety. Arthritis, heart disease, degenerative brain disease, cancer, lung disease, depression and anxiety all impact sleep.

Sleep issues should not be underestimated when managing age-related illness.

Illness and Pain:

Age brings about an increased likelihood of physical and mental conditions that disrupt sleep, as well as certain sleep disorders. Frequently, it is the associated pain and discomfort that interferes with sleep. Other disruptive features include breathing difficulties, frequent urination, depression and anxiety. Arthritis, heart disease, degenerative brain disease, cancer, lung disease, depression and anxiety all impact sleep. Sleep issues should not be underestimated when managing age-related illness.



Most Common Sleep Disorders in Older People

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)

REM Sleep Behavior Disorder (RBD)

Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome

Poor Sleep Hygiene

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)

Periodic Limb Movement Syndrome (PLMS)

SleepCaptions

Older Age Sleep Mechanics

Older age is a time of gradual physical decline, even in the healthiest of people. This decline may impact sleep. The most common reason for sleep disturbance in older persons is pain related to illness. In addition, circadian rhythms begin to shift sleep toward an earlier phase of the evening. The quality of sleep is lighter. More time is spent in REM sleep than the deeper stages of slumber, making it easier to awaken at night.



Need more information?

Visit the SleepMedicine Education web site at: sleepmedicineeducation.com for additional publications. See also:

SleepIssues: "Aging and Sleep"
"Sleep and Health"

SleepGuides: "Treating Sleep Disorders"

To schedule an appointment at any Sleep Medicine Centers location, visit www.sleepmedicinecenters.com or call:

(716)92-DREAM
(877)53-SNORE

Risks for Age-Related Sleep Problems

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Pain at night
- ✓ Snoring
- ✓ Anxiety or depression
- ✓ Another sleep disorder
- ✓ The use of certain medications

Effects of Age-Related Sleep Problems

- ✓ Worsening symptoms of illnesses
- ✓ Anxiety or Depression
- ✓ Increased likelihood of vehicle accident
- ✓ Isolation



Did You Know?

A study in the Journal SLEEP reports that men with chronic insomnia who slept for less than six hours per night were four times more likely to die during the 14 year follow-up period.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Commission found that men (52%) were more likely than women (30%) to report ever haven fallen asleep while driving.

In middle age, as many as 24% of men experience obstructive sleep

apnea, according to the Wisconsin Sleep Cohort Study.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, REM Sleep Behavior Disorder is significantly more prevalent in men, especially after age 50.