

Rule out Physical Issues

Sometimes pain may be the reason why your loved one keeps waking up at night. Their language difficulties may make it hard for them to express this. If your loved one has arthritis or a previous fracture, discuss pain management options with their doctor. If there is a sudden onset of nighttime waking, call the doctor so they can rule out any underlying medical cause such as a Urinary Tract Infection or other medical condition.

Reassure and Redirect

If your loved one does wake up at night, try to be available as soon as possible to offer assistance. Maybe they woke up because they have to use the bathroom but, if they can't find the bathroom, they may become anxious and agitated. If you are aware as soon as they are awake, you may be able to calmly direct them to the bathroom and return them safely to bed. If your loved one is a parent sleeping in another bedroom try using a baby monitor so you can hear when they wake up. Married couples sleeping in separate bedrooms may find it helpful to move into the same bedroom to make nighttime assistance easier.

WE CARE

We hope that these tips are useful in helping your loved one get a good night's sleep. Please know that the staff at Care2Caregivers is available to discuss these issues as they relate to your particular circumstances and help you come up with solutions so you can sleep better, too. Our dedicated, professional staff members have also been family caregivers, and they are here to listen.



WHEN YOU CARE • WE ARE THERE

For more information:

Comprehensive Services on Aging (COPSA) has been providing compassionate and sensitive mental health care to the elderly since 1975. A team of Geriatric Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Case Managers are available to assist families with diagnosis and treatment. COPSA also provides training for professionals, family caregivers and the community on issues related to aging, memory and mental health. Care2Caregivers provides resources, referrals, information and supportive counseling to anyone caring for someone with memory loss. Call for help.

HELPLINE: 800.424.2494

RUTGERS HEALTH

University Behavioral Health Care
COPSA Institute for Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders

SLEEP AND MEMORY LOSS

Tips to help you and your loved one get a good night's sleep




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Funded by The New Jersey Department of Human Services,
Division of Aging Services

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Many people with memory loss experience sleep disturbances. These issues may be due to a combination of changes in the brain and a person's physical health status. Here are some suggestions that may help your loved one, and you, get a good night's sleep.

Keep a Regular Sleep Routine

Memory loss can impact a person's ability to self-regulate their internal sleep and wake clock. They may want to sleep during the day and then may be up at night ready to leave the house. Therefore, it is important for the caregiver to monitor their loved one's wake and sleep cycle and encourage them to get up the same time each morning and go to bed the same time each night.

Stay Active

Keeping a person active during the day can help them sleep better at night. People with memory loss often

develop what is called apathy. They lose the ability to initiate and stay engaged in tasks. This is why it is so important for the caregiver to structure appropriate activities throughout the day to keep their loved one engaged. Ideas include taking walks, helping with the laundry, sweeping, or working on a word game. Keep in mind that your loved one may need help during these activities. Adult Day Programs are excellent options where your loved one will be able to participate in meaningful, supervised activities throughout the day. Many people who would sleep all day if they were home are able to be alert and engaged while at an Adult Day Program because they are being appropriately stimulated.

Monitor Napping

Napping may interfere with falling asleep at bedtime. If a nap is necessary to improve energy, try to limit it to no longer than 30 minutes and not too close to bedtime.

Environmental Cues

When bedtime is approaching, try to keep the lights dimmed. Play soothing music. If you are watching television, select shows that are not violent or scary. Turn the lights off in the bedroom except for a night light if necessary.

Monitor Food and Fluid Intake

Going to bed too full or hungry may cause discomfort, so plan your loved one's meals accordingly. Encourage fluids throughout the day, but limit them right before bed. Avoid caffeine which can be found in drinks other than coffee such as in tea, sports drinks and sodas. Also avoid alcohol, as this can disrupt sleep and increase your loved one's risk of a fall.

Medication

If the solutions you try do not work, it is time to talk with your medical provider. A doctor such as a Geriatric Psychiatrist or Neurologist can prescribe medications that may help regulate your loved one's sleep schedule. Be sure to give all medications as prescribed, paying attention to the side effects as explained by your doctor. If you feel they are not working, call and discuss your concerns right away.

Discuss with your doctor any over-the-counter sleep aids that you may be giving your loved one as they may impact other medications prescribed. Even those that are commonly given for a cold or cough may impact a person's sleep. Avoid using medications that may have been prescribed for other members of your family.



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ubhc.rutgers.edu/services/geriatric
www.Care2Caregivers.com