

Restorative sleep is important when someone has dementia

Facts you should know-

- As many as 40-70% of people with dementia will also have sleep disorders.
- Sleep disorders interfere with memory, cognition, problem solving and overall daily function.
- Sleep problems increase the risk of falls and fractures.
- Sleep problems can contribute to depression, irritability and aggression.
- Family caregivers also become sleep deprived and their health suffers.
- Untreated sleep problems are one of the most frequent contributing factors for institutionalization.
- Sleep problem can be helped by a range of research tested, non-drug methods



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Some strategies that can improve sleep for persons with dementia

- Avoid daytime napping
- Set a regular bed-time routine
- Keep the bedroom for sleeping only- don't use it for other activities (for example watching TV)
- Encourage exercise in the daytime - not in the evening
- Keep the bedroom as dark as possible
- Try running an electric fan at night to block out disturbing background noises
- Sometimes gentle music for a short period before bed helps a person fall asleep
- Increase exposure to daylight as much as possible is very important
- If daylight exposure is not possible consider purchasing a light box lamp to replace daylight. The pharmacist can help you select one.
- A warm bath in the evening, or a short period of time before bed under an electric blanket, encourages sleep
- Set the temperature in the bedroom to about 18 degrees celsius at night- too warm a bedroom can interfere with sleep
- Ask your doctor if melatonin would be good for your family member with dementia
- If worrying about the person with dementia getting out of bed at night interferes with your own sleep- consider a motion alarm or monitor system to wake you up. This can increase your own peace of mind and sleep.
- Talk to your occupational therapist and other healthcare providers about sleep problems - they can help.



Check our website - www.sleep-dementia-resources.ualberta.ca - for more information (active April 2011)

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