

## How can I help my loved one get to sleep at night?

Brain changes disrupt sleep patterns. Your loved one may have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep. Consider the following suggestions to help you and your loved one get much needed rest.

### Physical Causes

- Too many activities without rest may make your loved one feel over-tired and unable to settle down at night.
- Your loved one may feel the need to use the restroom frequently; this may be a sign that he/she is experiencing a urinary tract infection, constipation, or diarrhea.
- Your loved one may also be feeling discomfort from soiled underpants or bedsheets.
- Cognitive issues may make it more difficult for your loved one to tell the difference between a dream and reality.



### Environmental Causes

- A room that is too hot or too cold may make sleeping uncomfortable.
- Bright lights mimic the morning sun, which may prompt your loved one to stay awake.
- Watching television or browsing the internet may overstimulate your loved one and make it more difficult to relax.
- Low light and shadows may cause fear and confusion for a person with cognitive issues.

### What can I do?

- During the day, engage in activities that incorporate short periods of rest to prevent your loved one from being too tired at the end of the day.
- Provide opportunities to experience sunlight between 10:00 am – 4:00 pm to help reset sleep patterns.
- Make it easy for your loved one to get dressed and undressed by choosing attire with elastic waistbands, Velcro®, and slip-resistant soles.
- If your loved one is incontinent, consider using overnight briefs designed to wick moisture.
- Consider placing disposable absorbent pads underneath bedding or furniture.
- Create a restful environment by installing soft lights and limiting background noise.
- Play soothing music to promote a calm, restful environment.

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## ***What can I do?***

- Serve light dinners, limit caffeine after 2:00 pm, and offer a healthy bedtime snack if your loved one is hungry.
- Do not discuss upcoming events near bedtime, as this can trigger an anxious response that may keep your loved one up.

These suggestions address common barriers to restful sleep for those with cognitive changes. The hope is that once your loved one is sleeping soundly, you can enjoy some restful sleep as well.

Speak with your doctor if sleep problems persist. An undiagnosed illness, pain, medication, or chronic condition may disrupt sleep.

### **For More Information:**

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