

Ageless Wellness

Health Promotion Services

NYC Department for the Aging

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Sleep and Healthy Aging

Sleep, physical activity, and healthy eating create the three pillars of health which can help us achieve optimal wellness. While nutrition, and physical activity are recognized as key to a healthy life, sleep is often forgotten- but shouldn't be. Lack of sleep increases your risk of chronic diseases such as type-2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, and depression. Older adults need the same amount of sleep as younger people- about 7- 9 hours each night. However, older adults tend to go to sleep earlier, and wake-up earlier than when they were younger.

Insomnia affects almost half of adults 60 and older. If you have insomnia, you may experience the symptoms below:

- **Taking a long time to fall asleep- more than 30 to 45 minutes.**
- **Waking-up many times each night.**
- **Waking-up early, and having trouble getting back to sleep.**
- **Waking-up feeling tired.**

Many people think that poor sleep is a normal part of aging, but it is not. Many healthy older adults report few, or no sleep problems. Sleep patterns change as we age, but interrupted sleep, and waking-up tired are not part of healthy aging. If you are having trouble sleeping on a regular basis, see your doctor or a specialist in sleep medicine. Many primary care physicians can diagnose sleep disorders, and offer treatments that can help you sleep better.

Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

Below are a few tips that may help you get a good night's sleep:

-Maintain a sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day.

-Develop a bedtime ritual. Take the time to unwind before bedtime. Try listening to music, taking a bath, or reading.

-Give yourself about 20 minutes to fall asleep. If you can't sleep, get out of bed and do something else. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed.

-Stay away from caffeine late in the evening. Caffeine is found in not just coffee, but tea, soda, and chocolate.

-Stay away from alcohol as well, even small amounts may prevent you from staying asleep.

-Avoid eating large meals 3 hours before bedtime. This may keep you awake.

-Don't nap in late afternoon or evening, and avoid napping for more than 30 minutes.

-Exercise as often as you can, this may help you sleep as well, but not within 3 hours of bedtime.

-Limit the time you are exposed to the light from electronic devices such as TVs, cell phone, or tablet in the bedroom.

-Keep your bedroom at a temperature that is not too hot or cold, and as quiet as possible.

-Keep your bedroom dark. Use low light in the evening, and as you are getting ready for bed.

For Additional Information, Go to:

CDC Key Sleep Disorders

https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/key_disorders.html