



How Home Care Helps Seniors Sleep Better



By Neeta Nicholson

You probably know the feeling of having had a bad night of sleep. Maybe you have a harder time focusing and everything seems like it requires more energy. Yet with a little extra caffeine, you can make it through the day without anyone noticing. It is only when a bad night of sleep persists for a long time that it begins to take a toll on the overall quality of your life.

Not only can you become increasingly irritable, depressed, and unable to focus, but seniors also risk much more serious consequences – including falls. Here are some of the most common reasons older adults may have difficulty sleeping as well as a few ways home care can help.

Home care can be extremely beneficial for seniors with sleep conditions. Here are a few ways it can help.

Caregivers can help regulate sleeping hours.

Many of sleep disorders, such as insomnia and advanced sleep phase disorder, can be improved by maintaining a consistent schedule.

Caregivers can be great for keeping you or your senior loved one on a consistent sleep schedule. Furthermore, they can stay on the lookout for changes in their wakefulness and take steps to ensure they are getting enough sleep.

Home care can reduce stress.

Stress is a common cause of insomnia. Having an in-home caregiver can alleviate some of the stress you experience, allowing you to sleep better.

Caregivers can uncover breathing problems.

Not only can home care alleviate many of the obstacles that interfere with the duration and quality of your slumber, but they can also help you identify underlying issues you were unaware of. Many seniors, particularly those who live alone, are completely unaware they have a sleep condition such as sleep apnea. Because sleep apnea occurs while you are sleeping, it often takes another person to bring the signs to your attention.

Caregivers can note your sleeping behaviors and alert you of any irregularities. For example, loud snoring can be a key indicator of obstructive sleep apnea. Caregivers can let you know if you snore loud – something you might not otherwise be aware of.

Caregivers can help prepare your bedroom.

Caregivers can help seniors by preparing their bedroom for sleep. They can do this by ensuring the room is quiet and dark. Caregivers can also make sure your sheets, pillows, and blankets are washed on a regular basis.

Caregivers for seniors diagnosed with REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD) can help put safety measures in place, such as a bed rail or padding to cover corners of furniture, and can assist in removing sharp items or other potentially dangerous objects from the bedroom.

Tips For a Good Night's Sleep

Be intentional about sleep. For many adults, sleep is something that just happens. You go bed when you are tired and can't stay up any longer. Being intentional about your sleep requires you to make sleep a priority.



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Keep a regular schedule. Going to bed and waking up at different times can disrupt your circadian rhythm, triggering insomnia and daytime sleepiness. One of the best ways to ensure you get a good night's sleep is to have a consistent sleep schedule; yes this includes weekends.

Be smart about naps. If you want to take a nap, be sure to take it in the earlier part of the day. Taking a nap too late can keep you awake at night.

Have a bedtime routine. A bedtime routine is a great way to end your day. It helps prime your body for sleep.

Take a warm shower. Your body temperature naturally decreases when you sleep. Taking a warm shower helps prepare you for bed by forcing you to cool down.

Avoid light. Light inhibits the production of melatonin, your body's natural sleeping pill. Try to avoid light during the last hour before bed. This includes cell phones and television.

Avoid caffeine after noon. Caffeine can stay in your system for long after you feel it effects. Avoid drinking caffeine afternoon.

Avoid alcohol. Many adults claim alcohol helps them fall asleep faster. While you may think it is helping you, it is proven to decrease the quality and duration of your slumber.

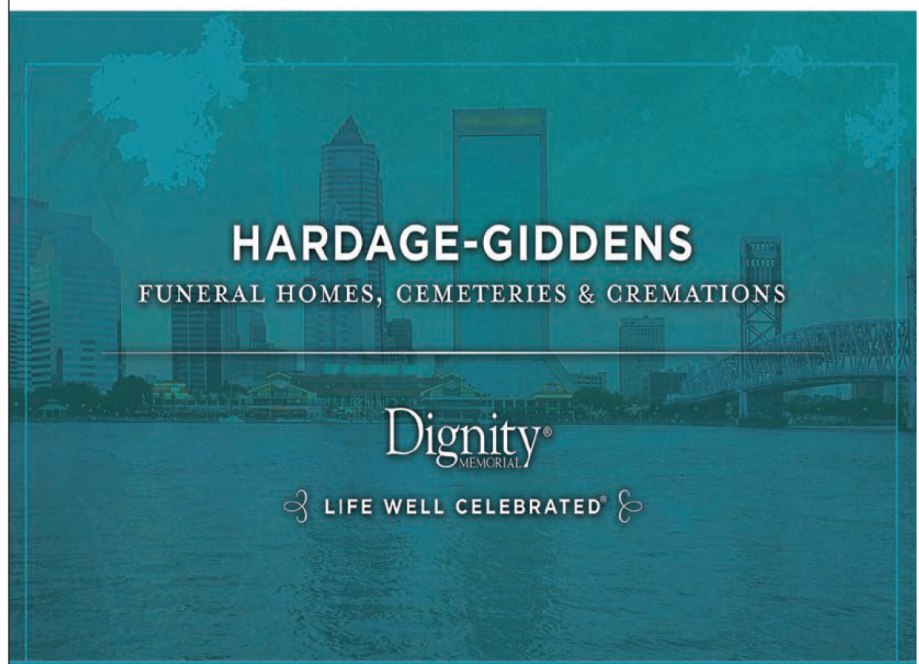
Don't Ignore Negative Sleep-Related Changes

Many older adults find themselves getting less and less sleep as they transition into the later years of their lives. Assuming it is just a normal part of the aging process, this change often goes ignored. Unfortunately, failing to address changes in your sleep patterns can be detrimental to your health. If you or a loved one experience negative changes in your sleep quality, address it before it negatively affects your overall well-being.

Neeta and Tom Nicholson are the owners of AMADA Senior Care in Jacksonville. AMADA provides caregivers to seniors at home around the clock to ensure safety and health of your loved ones. Information about their services can be found on www.amadajacksonville.com or call us at (904) 512-7747.



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