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Managing Sleep Problems in Alzheimer's Disease

[Alzheimer's disease](#) often affects a person's sleeping habits. People with Alzheimer's may experience the following sleep problems:

- Sleeping a lot or not enough
- Waking up many times during the night
- Napping a lot during the day
- Restlessness, agitation, irritability, and confusion as daylight begins to fade, known as [sundowning](#)

Getting better sleep as a caregiver

When a person with Alzheimer's has sleep problems, it can also affect the sleep that their caregiver gets. People with Alzheimer's and their caregivers both need restful sleep.

Learn more about [how to improve your sleep](#).

Here are some tips that may help caregivers ease sleep problems in people with Alzheimer's:

- [Help the person get exercise](#) each day.
- Limit naps and dozing late in the day.
- [Plan activities](#) that use more energy early in the day. For example, try [bathing](#) in the morning or having the largest meal in the middle of the day.
- Set a quiet, peaceful mood in the evening to help the person relax. Keep the lights low, try to reduce noise levels, and play soothing music if the person enjoys it.
- Follow a regular schedule by going to sleep and getting up at the same time each day, even on weekends or when traveling.
- Develop a relaxing bedtime routine with lowered lights, cool temperature, and no electronic screens.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Use nightlights in the bedroom, hall, and bathroom.



[Read and share this infographic](#) about healthy sleep habits for older adults.

Getting help with sleep problems

If sleep problems continue to be a challenge, [talk with a health care provider](#). They may be able to identify possible causes and suggest solutions. For example, a person with Alzheimer's may have a medical condition or take a medication that causes sleep problems. In other cases, Alzheimer's itself may be causing changes to the brain that disrupt sleep. The health care provider may recommend medication or nonmedication strategies to help the person sleep well.

You may also be interested in

- Exploring information on [coping with agitation, aggression, and sundowning in Alzheimer's](#)
- Watching a video on [managing personality and behavior changes in Alzheimer's](#)
- Learning [how to take care of yourself as a caregiver](#)