



BAI Beacon

The Newsletter from Family and Community Services

www.banneralz.org

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A Good Night Sleep

We all know the benefits of a good night sleep on our mental and physical well-being. This is even more important for a person with dementia and their family caregiver. However, up to a third of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias will likely develop changes in sleep that can include sleeping more, sleeping less, waking up in the middle of the night to begin the day, and/or waking up from a dream and believing it is real.

While changes in the brain from the underlying dementia contribute to many of these problems, there are other considerations. Medical conditions and medications can cause to sleep problems. For example, people with congestive heart failure often take diuretics (e.g. water pills) that may cause the person to get up frequently to use the toilet, making getting back to sleep difficult. Some people may have a sleep-disturbing issue such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome. Others may have poor sleep habits that can further cause difficulty with sleep.

As any type of dementia progresses into the later stages, it is common to see the person sleep more throughout the 24-hour period. The demands of the disease take their toll on the person's brain and they are more likely to need added rest to function when they are awake. If the person is earlier in their illness and is sleeping too much, consider one of two things: Is the person bored because there is little to do/engage in, or could they be depressed? Either situation must be addressed.

One of the most frustrating situations for family caregivers is the person who wakes in the middle of the night wanting to start the day. This commonly happens in the moderate stage of the illness when confusion has worsened and the ability to understand time has been lost. Often this person is going to bed by 7 p.m. and waking up around 3 a.m. By this time, the person has been in bed for eight hours. He/she cannot comprehend that it is the middle of the night, and despite trying to explain, showing him/her the time, etc., the day has begun for that person. Trying to "sleep train" i.e. keeping the person busy the day before and prohibiting naps, will likely make the situation worse not better.

Important strategies to use in all people with dementia include:

- Establish a routine and stick with it! Try to carry out activities in the same sequence each day. For example, Morning: get up, have breakfast, get dressed, take a walk, come home and take a rest (or nap). Afternoon: eat lunch; engage in activity, rest period/nap; Evening: have dinner, watch favorite TV shows, listen to music, and go to bed. Ideally, try to have a consistent time to go to bed.
- Make sure to introduce rest periods during the daytime hours. Remember, all people with dementia tire easily as they are working twice as hard to keep pace with daily activities and life. While the person may resist resting, invite the person to join you in a quiet activity such as listening to music, reading the paper, watching a non-violent TV show. Naps are highly encouraged and refreshing but be sure to avoid napping in bed which can lead to confusion upon waking as the person is likely to think it is the

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Ideas to Promote Sleep

During the day:

- Try to maintain a routine each day
- Provide rest periods and/or naps throughout the day
- A late afternoon nap often makes the evening less confusing
- Avoid caffeine intake after 2 p.m.
- Avoid alcohol as there can be a rebound effect, waking the person six hours later

Before bedtime:

Create good nighttime routines including

- Avoid TV and/or the computer up to one hour prior to bedtime as it can cause excess stimulation
- Have a bedtime snack
- Have a cup of herbal tea
- Listen to calming music
- Meditate and/pray
- Read a short story
- Give a back rub or foot rub

Brain Health Tip:

Napping during the day is not only an effective and refreshing alternative to caffeine, it can also protect your health and make you more productive. In fact, napping can improve memory, cognitive function and mood.



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Banner Alzheimer's Institute



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beginning of a new day. For the person who wants to go to bed early in the evening and will wake up too early – we highly advise getting them to take a late (4 p.m.) afternoon nap and then establish some different routines and activities to keep the person up later in the evening.

- Encourage routine physical and social activity each day. Studies consistently show that those who get up to one to two hours/day of activity sleep better at night. Adult Day Health Care programs provide an excellent way to promote exercise and socialization while giving the caregiver respite. Hiring a companion is another way to accomplish these activities.
- Evening rituals can also play an important role in promoting falling to sleep. Make sure that caffeine is stopped by 2 p.m. and avoiding alcohol and nicotine will also be helpful. Providing a bedtime snack, a cup of milk or herbal tea can be enjoyable and soothing. Prompt the person use the toilet before bed. Listening to quiet music and/or reading a short story, scripture, etc. can also be relaxing.
- Make sure the environment promotes comfort. Check that the room temperature is not too hot/cold for the person. Reduce the amount of light in the immediate area. White noise, such as a fan, can be soothing for some.
- When a person wakes up from a dream and believes it is true, don't argue with the person or try to reason. Rather, listen carefully, provide assurance and support, and then use a pleasant distraction (such as a favorite treat) and the dream will soon be forgotten.
- For the person who wants to be up at night, safety proofing the home will be essential. First, determine what room is the safest for the person, and draw them to that room by making sure it is well lighted. Be sure that anything that could cause danger is removed. Place deadbolt locks on the door or a childproof door handle. Make sure that ready to eat food/drink is left in plain sight in the room so basic needs are met. Having a rummaging box or activities in sight will also give the person something to do.
- Caregivers should take advantage of naps when the person with dementia does. Getting adequate rest for the caregiver is essential to maintain overall health.
- Avoid over-the-counter sleep aids that contain diphenhydramine, as they will increase confusion and cause excessive daytime drowsiness.

If caregivers employs these strategies and sleep remains an issue for the person with dementia, the person's physician should be consulted. Caregivers may find these same strategies can benefit their sleep as well!



Ask The Expert

Geri Hall, PhD, RN
Clinical Nurse Specialist

Dear Geri:

My mom is sleeping at all the wrong hours of the day. She gets up in the morning, has breakfast, gets dressed, and then goes back to sleep for an hour. Then she gets up, has lunch, and wants to sleep again. She wants dinner at 5 p.m. and then wants to go to bed by 7 p.m.! But at 3:00 a.m. she is wide awake and wanting to start the new day. I have to convince her that it is the middle of the night. She gets upset, so I get upset and I never get any sleep at night!

Mom used to be so perky during the day and now she is just lazy! Do we need sleeping pills? Is this normal?

Exhausted!

Dear Exhausted:

Sleep is one of the biggest issues in caregiving for people with dementia: they sleep too little; they sleep too much; they can have vivid dreams; be restless during sleep, or even develop sleep apnea.

People with dementia use a lot of energy to concentrate on living in their environment. They have to figure out how to do everything in the right sequence, remember despite failing memory, and gain meaning from their surroundings when the ability to see, hear, and interpret are damaged by the brain. Because of this, people with dementia tire very quickly and require frequent rest periods. In mid-disease or with a frail adult, rest periods are often naps and two to three naps per day are normal and desirable. As a general rule, rest periods and naps should not exceed 90 minutes.

If the person does not rest, we tend to see them become over-stimulated resulting in late day confusion and staying up at night. With your mom, I suspect the problem is that she needs a third rest/nap immediately before supper and a night-time ritual activity (such as a dish of ice cream) at 8 or 8:30 p.m. to keep her up later. Giving her the pre-dinner rest will help diminish the late day fatigue and help you to help her regain a more normal bed and thus waking time.

When trying to examine the sleep problem, it is a good idea to keep a sleep diary for a week or so, recording the times when she is awake and asleep. This will help determine the cause of excessive sleeping, usually caused by depression, boredom, or the person being unable to think of and start activities. I suggest trying the above without medications and then take the diary to either your BAI Family and Community Services staff member or your mom's doctor.

Sleeping pills can be helpful, however have side-effects such as increasing confusion or falls. For that reason we consider them to be a last resort. However, if the family has been kept up night after night, a brief trial of sleeping medication can help everyone get back onto a normal schedule.

Have a question?

To submit your question for future consideration email us at
baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

Beacon Bits

GPS for Memory

Creating Meaning and Having Fun in People with Dementia

Friday, July 13, 2012

10:30 a.m. – Noon

Musical Instrument Museum

Cost: Free

Register: (602) 230-CARE

Memory Assistance and Planning Session (MAPS) Workshop

Friday, July 20, 2012

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Foundation for Senior Living

Caregiver House

1201 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix
85014

\$40 pp (BAI Families), \$60 pp (Non-BAI Families)

Cost includes continental
breakfast,

lunch, instruction and materials.

Register: (602) 839-6850

Registration limited to 30
participants

COMPASS for Caregivers

July 19, 2012

10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

July 30, 2012

4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Banner Alzheimer's Institute

3rd Floor Conference Room

Cost: Free

Register: (602) 839-6850

Are you planning a summer vacation or visiting family and friends? If so, the BAI Travel Guide is available free of charge and will provide you with all kinds of practical tips so that you can plan a successful trip! Call (602) 839-6850 or email Deidra.Colvin@bannerhealth.com to get your copy.

Stay up to date on the Alzheimer's Prevention Initiative (API) and join the API registry by visiting www.endALZnow.org.

Our Mission

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.