

CHECKLIST:

Activities to Try to Improve Nighttime Sleep for Residents with Dementia

FACTS:

- Residents with dementia usually have problems sleeping.
- Common side effects of certain medications, including antipsychotics, can contribute to sleep disorders.
- Fewer naps during the day may help residents sleep better at night.

What activities may help a resident with dementia have improved sleep at night?

- ☐ Is there an established routine for the resident at night? An established routine includes changing into night clothes, washing his or her face at a certain time and in a certain order and going to bed the same time every night.
- ☐ Encourage staff to provide the resident with reassurance and cues to orient him or her.
- ☐ Have staff provide calming activities at the end of the day and before bedtime (i.e., reading, playing an audio book, reminiscing, singing, playing calming music or ambient sounds, etc.).
- ☐ Put precautionary processes in place to avoid the occurrence of loud noises at night.
- ☐ Try to make sure the resident does not watch TV at least an hour before bedtime, especially shows with violence and action.
- ☐ If appropriate, increase daily activities, including walking, socializing, playing games and participating in mind-challenging activities.

What if a resident sleeps too much during the day and is restless at night?

- ☐ Engage the resident in meaningful activities, especially those he or she enjoyed before coming to the nursing home (e.g., walks, shopping, visits from family or friends, conversations, activities that help him or her stay as independent as possible). Note: Try to involve the resident's family.
- ☐ Individualize the resident's care plan, and be sure to include his or her specific likes and dislikes.
- ☐ Take time to get to know the resident and identify what he or she likes to hear, touch, taste, smell and see.
- ☐ Have staff identify what medications the resident is taking, as certain medications can affect sleep.

What if a resident has a decreased melatonin level?

- ☐ Weather permitting, increase activities that allow the resident to spend time outdoors. Find sunny areas in the nursing home for activities. During long winter months, try introducing artificial light therapy. Note: Exposure to sunlight increases the melatonin level, which regulates the sleep cycle and is known to increase positive moods.