

Healthy Sleep Self-Management Plan

- Consider setting a regular sleep schedule, e.g., getting up and going to bed at the same time.
- Limit alcohol before bed.

- Avoid caffeine 8 hours before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly, however avoid exercising right before bedtime.

Green Flags — All Clear

What this means ...



If you:

- Do not have difficulty sleeping.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule.

- Good work!

Keep up the great work!

Yellow Flags — Caution

What this means ...



If you:

- Regularly have difficulty sleeping, getting to, or staying asleep.
- Have an irregular sleep schedule.
- Frequently wake up during the night.
- Have a loss of interest in activities or have decreased appetite

- You are having sleep problems.
- Loss of interest could indicate depression.

Talk with your health care provider to discuss your specific issues with sleep.

Health Care Provider:

Number:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags — Stop and Think

What this means ...



If you:

- Sleep problems have persisted for more than three months and affect your daily life.
- You've been told you snore; you wake up in the middle of the night, or have trouble staying awake during the day-
- You have aches and pains in your lower legs, making it difficult to sleep.

- You may have chronic insomnia.
- You may have sleep apnea.

Talk with your health care provider to discuss your specific sleep problems.

Health Care Provider:

Number:

If you notice a Red Flag, contact your health care team.

Sleep Fast Facts

- Sleeplessness is common. About 50% of older adults report difficulty falling asleep or maintaining sleep. For some, it is a passing problem; for others, sleeplessness can impact quality of life and add to additional health issues.
- The National Sleep Foundation recommends 7–8 hours of sleep for adults aged 65 and older. Sleeping between 6–9 hours has shown better mental health, physical health, and quality of life. So most adults need 7–9 hours. Too little or too much sleep is associated with heart disease.
- The word “Insomnia” means having difficulty falling or staying asleep for an extended amount of time. Symptoms include difficulty falling asleep, trouble staying asleep, or waking up too early.
- When you have sleeplessness now and then, often due to stress from personal or economic issues, it is called acute insomnia. When insomnia becomes chronic, lasting three months or longer, it is important to talk with a health care provider as this affects your overall health and wellness.
- Some health conditions can cause or worsen sleep problems, including thyroid disorders, anxiety, depression, menopausal symptoms, nighttime asthma attacks, sleep apnea, pain, dementia, depression, Parkinson’s disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, congestive heart failure, and gastrointestinal disorders (e.g., gastroesophageal disease, constipation, diarrhea, acute colitis, gastric ulcer, and incontinence).
- Psychosocial factors that affect sleep include loneliness, decreased activity, social isolation, loss of loved one(s), and loss of routine.
- Certain medications/substances can affect sleep, and these include:
 - Diuretics
 - Stimulating agents
 - Antihypertensives-taken to control high blood pressure.
 - Cholinesterase inhibitors-
 - Corticosteroids
 - Alcohol
 - Caffeine

What can you do?

- If you have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, keep a sleep diary. This can provide your healthcare provider with helpful information.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about a clinical diagnosis for your sleep problem.
- Only go to bed when tired. If you’ve been in bed for more than 20 minutes, you should get out of bed and consider moving outside of your bedroom. Avoid putting on television or using your phone or computer. You can sit quietly in a chair that might help you relax.
- Avoid napping during the day, or if you do nap, keep the naps short, for only 10–20 minutes and take naps early in the afternoon. Napping after 3 p.m. can interfere with nighttime sleep.
- Stay physically active, as exercise can help people sleep better and feel more alert. It is important, however, not to exercise before bed, as this can affect your sleep.
- Create a good sleeping environment. Move your phones or computer away from your bed and dim the light on the screen. Keep the bedroom at a cooler temperature and adjust accordingly to your preferences.
- Consider meditation, mindfulness, paced breathing, or other relaxation techniques before bed.

Ageing and Disability Services

Ageing and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Ageing for King County—plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County. For information about services or interpretation assistance, call 844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org.



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