

Why can't I sleep?



Understanding sleep problems and when to seek help

If you are having trouble sleeping

You are not alone

44% of older adults have trouble sleeping



Do you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep?

Has anyone mentioned you snore? Do find yourself falling asleep a lot during the day?

Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night, but one-third don't get it. Not getting enough sleep is linked to weight gain and obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, heart disease, stroke, and a greater risk of death. Sleeping less than seven hours weakens the immune system, decreases cognitive performance, and increases risks of accidents.

The good news is that chronic sleep problems and excessive daytime sleepiness are very treatable. Getting consistent, high-quality sleep improves virtually all aspects of physical and mental health. It strengthens our immune systems, sharpens brain function, and enhances our moods.

The first step in addressing a sleep problem is to find out what is causing it. There are many reasons why people do not get the sleep they need. It is important to find out what is normal, what is not and when to seek help.

Some common sleep problems can be caused by normal age-related biological changes. You may experience more disruptions during your sleep because you spend more time in the lighter sleep stages. A shift in sleep patterns may also cause you to become sleepy in the early evening and to wake up too early in the morning. Despite these changes, many older adults report feeling rested most of the time.

Other sleep changes may interfere with your sleep so much that a medical professional should be contacted. These are a few common sleep problems you may want to discuss.

[Click here for a printable sleep diary.](#)
Go to www.cje.net/sleepdiary.



- **Insomnia** is the most common sleep problem. Symptoms include having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, waking too early, or daytime sleepiness.
- **Sleep Apnea** is a sleep disorder where a person has pauses in breathing or periods of shallow breathing during sleep. Each pause can last for a few seconds to a few minutes and is often followed by loud snoring. Sleep Apnea is diagnosed with a sleep study conducted by a sleep specialist.
- **Restless Legs Syndrome** is generally a long-term disorder that causes a strong urge to move your legs. There is often an unpleasant feeling in the legs that improves somewhat by moving them. The discomfort is often described as aching, tingling, or crawling in nature and causes significant sleep disturbances.
- **Narcolepsy** is a chronic sleep disorder that causes overwhelming daytime drowsiness and sudden attacks of sleep.

If daytime sleepiness is affecting how you feel or function, reach out to a medical provider to discuss your sleep concerns. Avoid the temptation to buy over the counter sleep aids which can be habit forming and do not address the problem. A medical provider can assess your sleep habits and if necessary, refer you to a sleep specialist.

For more information check out:

- National Sleep Foundation: [sleepfoundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org)
- Centers for Disease Control: [cdc.gov/sleep/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html)

How can CJE SeniorLife help?

We can refer you to the following CJE Senior Life supportive resources:

Community Engagement—We offer educational programs on common sleep problems and provide tips, tools and supportive resources to improve sleep. Our community engagement team offers a wide variety of program topics that target all aspects of well-being (mind, body, spirit) that can be tailored to your unique group.

Counseling Services—Sleep disruption can often occur during an episode of depression or anxiety. Our highly skilled Licensed Clinical Social Workers are specialists in treating these common disorders and can offer guidance on improving sleep habits as part of this treatment. We offer individual, family and group psychotherapy, as well as support groups.

Your Eldercare Consultants—We work collaboratively with physicians, develop Care Plans, coordinate home care, guide families and find practical resources that support independence. Ongoing services are fee-based.

CJE Care Management—We make assessments, develop Care Plans and refer clients to free and low-cost services. Must meet financial eligibility.

To find out more about our many services and programs, Call CJE SeniorLife at 773.508.1000.

THE CJE ADVANTAGE: Our broad continuum of care offers people of all ages, faiths and incomes access to life-enriching opportunities, resources and healthcare. Our Jewish values make us the provider of choice for enhancing lives and navigating the positive aging process.

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CJE SeniorLife® is a partner with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community.

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