

Sleep as you Grow Older

Montrose Regional Health Sleep Clinic • (970) 240-7101

Do you Have Trouble Sleeping?

As people age, they may notice that they develop problems sleeping. There is a common misconception that having trouble sleeping is just part of getting older. This is incorrect. Many changes in health are a normal part of aging, but sleep issues may be a sign of a sleep disorder or other health problem.

What can Cause Difficulties Sleeping?

Depression — Sleep issues may be an indicator that you have depression. Some individuals with depression may wake up early without being able to fall asleep, and others may sleep more than they need to. Signs of depression in older adults include lacking interest in activities that you usually enjoy, a loss of appetite, withdrawing from others, and feeling like you have little energy.



Grief and Sadness — Feelings of grief and sadness are more common in those who recently lost a loved one. Concerning or repetitive thoughts can interfere with your sleep.

Pain — Various other medical issues can cause pain that interferes with sleep. Examples include arthritis, headaches, cancer, and fibromyalgia. Additionally, problems such as lung or heart conditions can cause problems sleeping. Speak with an expert at the MRH Sleep Clinic if you suspect that a medical condition could be negatively affecting your sleep.

Sleep Disorders

Certain sleep disorders are found more commonly in older adults.

Restless Legs Syndrome — Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) occurs when you experience a strong urge to move your legs. It is also possible to feel a burning or itching sensation inside your legs. These symptoms usually occur in the evening or right before bed. RLS can make it difficult to go to sleep, and you may wake up tired the next day.

Insomnia — Insomnia is a sleep disorder in which individuals consistently have issues falling or staying asleep. Older adults with insomnia might wake up early in the morning and have trouble going back to sleep.

Obstructive Sleep Apnea — Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) occurs when the airway collapses partially or completely during sleep. Symptoms of OSA include loud or constant snoring, daytime sleepiness even after a full night's rest, or choking and gasping for air while you sleep. If you suspect you have OSA, speak with an expert at the MRH Sleep Clinic today.

Common Culprits of Sleep Issues

Alcohol — Avoid using alcohol as a sleep aid. It may help you to fall asleep, but it also increases your chances of waking up during the night. It may also increase the your likelihood of having nightmares.

Sleeping Pills — Sleeping pills can contribute to daytime sleepiness. Additionally, they may cause you to want more naps during the day, which causes trouble sleeping at night.

Medications — Certain medications can affect your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep and can negatively impact your sleep quality. Examples include beta blockers and over-the-counter pain medicine. Consult one of our experts to find out if your medications could be impacting your sleep.

How to Improve Your Sleep

Exercise — It is possible to have trouble falling asleep if you didn't get enough activity during the day. Talk to your health care provider about starting a new exercise program.

Take a Short Nap — Short naps during the day can be a healthy addition to nighttime sleep. Limit your naps to an hour and do not nap in the late afternoon.

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Change Your Sleep Habits — If you wake up early in the morning, don't stay in bed until you think you should get up. Get out of bed right after you wake up and don't go back to your bed until you are ready to sleep for the night.

