

Shh... Goodnight, Sleep Well Q&A



Q: I have trouble falling asleep at night. Is this just a part of normal aging?

A: Many people believe that poor sleep is a normal part of aging, but it is not. In fact, many healthy older adults report few or no sleep problems. Sleep patterns change as we age, but disturbed sleep and waking up tired every day are not part of normal aging. One thing you could try after turning off the light, give yourself about 15 minutes to fall asleep. If you are still awake and not drowsy, get out of bed. When you get sleepy, go back to bed.

Q: My spouse says that I snore horribly. What can be done about it?

A: You are not alone, approximately 40% of adults snore. Snoring is caused by a partial obstruction, or blockage, of the airway passage from the nose and mouth to the lungs. The blockage causes the tissues in these passages to vibrate, leading to the noise produced when someone snores. You can try these lifestyle changes, which may help you stop snoring. Change your sleep position. Lose weight. Weight loss helps some people but not everyone -- thin people snore, too. Limit alcohol intake and avoid taking sedative medications. Use caution before you self-treat with over-the-counter sprays and pills until you talk with your doctor.

Q: At what point should I see a doctor about a sleeping problem?

A: If you are often tired during the day and don't feel that you sleep well, you should discuss this with your doctor or healthcare provider. Many primary care providers can diagnose sleep disorders and offer suggestions and treatments that can improve your sleep.