



THE 3 A.M. PROBLEM

When Dementia Doesn't Sleep through the Night



Nighttime wakefulness is common in people living with dementia, and it can turn one person's sleep problem into two people's care problem. A person may wake repeatedly, become restless or confused, wander, or sleep more during the day.

NIGHTTIME CHANGES THE CARE EQUATION.

Ask the family...

- ? Is your loved one waking frequently overnight?
- ? Are they more confused or restless after dark?
- ? Are they waking up to use the bathroom?
- ? Do they wander or believe it's time to start the day?
- ? Are they sleeping more during daytime hours?
- ? Is a spouse staying awake to keep them safe?

WHY IS MOM AWAKE?

Don't assume it's "just the dementia."

Look for possible contributors...

- Pain • Hunger or thirst • Need to toilet
- Medication effects • Too much daytime sleep
- Too little daytime activity • Anxiety
- An unfamiliar environment

Persistent or sudden changes in sleep should be discussed with the healthcare provider to rule out medical or medication-related causes.

HELP RESET THE NIGHT

Small changes may help support a healthier sleep-wake rhythm.



DAYTIME

- ✓ Encourage daylight exposure.
- ✓ Add appropriate physical activity.
- ✓ Keep a predictable daily routine.
- ✓ Limit long or late-day naps.



EVENING

- ✓ Reduce noise and stimulation.
- ✓ Create a calm, familiar bedtime routine.
- ✓ Limit caffeine later in the day.
- ✓ Use nightlights to make nighttime navigation easier.

AND WHAT ABOUT DAD?

An overnight home caregiver provides supervision, reassurance, toileting assistance, and redirection when needed—while the family caregiver has restorative sleep.

Don't just ask, "How are things at home?" Ask, "How are the nights?"

Sources: National Institute on Aging;
Alzheimer's Association.

If dementia-related nighttime needs are exhausting the family caregiver, let's talk about how home care helps make the nights more manageable—for everyone.



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