

# NICHE

NURSES IMPROVING CARE FOR HEALTHSYSTEM ELDERS

## Need to Know for Patients and Families

*What patients  
and their  
families need to  
know before  
hospitalization  
or a nursing  
home admission*

### SLEEP

#### Why Is It Important?

Sleep is necessary for health and well-being. Changes in the quality and quantity of sleep occur naturally as we get older. The incidence of sleep disorders can also increase with age. It may be difficult for older adults to get adequate, restful sleep, especially in the hospital setting where noise and frequent interruptions in sleep occur.

#### What You Can Do:

1. Ask your health care provider to review your medications; certain drugs can cause sleep problems
2. Ask your nurse or other health care team member to help create a good sleep environment including:
  - Room temperature you prefer
  - Bed position you prefer
  - Lowered lights
  - Extra pillows
  - Warmed blanket
  - Closed curtains
  - Minimum noise
3. While in the hospital or long term care setting, try to maintain your usual bed time and bedtime routines, such as:
  - Washing your face
  - Listening to soothing music
  - Prayer
  - Brushing your teeth
  - Reading
4. Avoid caffeine and other beverages containing stimulants during the afternoon and evening hours
5. Avoid sleeping during the day
6. Speak to the nurse or other health care team member about trying decaffeinated herbal tea or warm milk before bedtime
7. Urinate right before bedtime
8. If experiencing pain, ask for medication before planning to sleep



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