

People with cancer often report sleep problems. Some find that they are sleeping much more than usual. Others say they experience insomnia, which is the inability to fall and stay asleep. Excessive sleep, too little sleep, restlessness, and increased dream activity or nightmares can significantly affect how you cope with daily activities.

For some people going through cancer treatment, disruption in sleep can be one of the most distressing side effects they face. If your loved one is feeling affected by changes in sleep patterns, talk to their health care team. There are treatments and support services that can help with sleep problems. Below are some sleep tips that can be helpful both for you and your loved one.

TIPS FOR MANAGING TOO MUCH SLEEP (10+ hours each day):

- Try to get some exercise every day, especially during the morning or early afternoon.
- Develop a routine to sleep and wake at the same time every day. Get out of bed when it is time and try to engage in activities that you enjoy.
- Try to have bright lights or sunlight in your room in the morning and dim the lights in the evening before bed.
- Avoid foods or activities that make you tired during the day.
- If you feel that sadness or depression may be contributing to sleeping too much, talk to the health care team about these symptoms to create a plan for relief.
- Work with the doctor to understand if medication side effects or other medical conditions (such as thyroid problems) may be causing drowsiness or fatigue.



www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

1-888-793-9355



TIPS FOR MANAGING TOO LITTLE SLEEP (Less than 6 hours each day):

- Work with the health care team to address underlying sources of insomnia, such as pain, anxiety, or stimulating medication.
- Try to go to sleep and – even more important – wake up at the same time each day.
- If you cannot fall asleep, get out of bed and do something quiet and relaxing until you feel tired before returning to bed. Staying in bed for long periods when feeling frustrated or upset about your sleep can make sleep problems worse.
- Avoid checking the time throughout the night, which can increase stress and make sleep problems worse. Set an alarm for when you need to wake up and cover the clock's screen.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco, especially at night.
- If you are hungry at bedtime, eat a light snack.
- If you are able, exercise regularly. Or at the very least, move about during the day.
- Sleep in a quiet, dark room that is not too hot or cold.
- Start a bedtime ritual, such as reading or taking a bath, to signal it is time for sleep.
- Medications are sometimes a short-term treatment for insomnia.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE DREAMS OR NIGHTMARES

- If you are troubled by disturbing dreams or nightmares, talk about a trusted family member,
- friend, health care team, or professional counselor about your concerns. Talk therapy can be very
- helpful in reducing stress and anxiety from sleep disturbances.
- Imagine alternative endings or storylines to the nightmares.

General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

Cancer Support Community • 888-793-9355 • www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

American Cancer Society • 800-227-2345 • www.cancer.org

CancerCare • 800-813-4673 • www.cancercare.org

Cancer.net • 888-651-3038 • www.cancer.net

Caregiver Action Network • 855-227-3640 • www.caregiveraction.org

Healthcare.gov • www.healthcare.gov

Livestrong Foundation • 866-673-7205 • www.livestrong.org

National Cancer Institute • 800-422-6237 • www.cancer.gov

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine • 888-644-6226 • www.nccam.nih.gov

Patient Advocate Foundation • 800-532-5274 • www.patientadvocate.org

Cancer Support Community Resources

Cancer Support Community's (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org for more info.

Cancer Support Helpline® — Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

Open to Options® — Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

Frankly Speaking About Cancer® — Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs. www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer.

Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs — With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation.

MyLifeLine — CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at www.MyLifeLine.org.

Grassroots Network — Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate.

Cancer Experience Registry® — Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org.

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.