

Senior Village at SaddleBrooke

Neighbors helping Neighbors



The Dangers of Sleeping Meds as We Age by Judy Cummings

One of the perks of retirement is that you can get up in the morning, have a cup (or 2) of coffee and enjoy the morning without having to rush off somewhere. However, if you have problems with sleep the night before - either falling asleep or sleeping through the night - you may not wake up feeling rested.

Often, we think that using a sleeping medication will help us get back on track. But that is not a recommended solution. Seniors, in particular, are at greater risk for serious injuries if taking sleep medications. Senior Village, as part of its mission to keep its members safe and able to enjoy living longer in their homes, would like to offer a few tips.

As we age, the ability to get a good night's sleep becomes more elusive. Disruptions in sleep can be due to factors like pain/discomfort from a chronic disease, daytime napping, frequent urination, depression, or side effects of other medications.

The use of sleeping pills may be a short-term solution, but ongoing use can be detrimental and addictive. The biggest danger is falling because of dizziness and confusion which can result in broken bones and concussions. The most common over-the-counter sleep medications, such as Tylenol Nighttime and Benadryl, also cause urinary retention, constipation and dry mouth. Effects are more pronounced in older people because they tend to have slower metabolisms, low body weight and other medical problems.

Common prescription drugs, such as lorazepam and diazepam, have the same alarming effects of dizziness, confusion, etc. which are often ignored because people think these are just common problems related to getting older. If it does become necessary to take a sleeping aide, use the lowest dose possible for the shortest amount of time. Be very careful when getting out of bed. Pause a moment to stand and get your balance before walking.

One alternative to a sleeping aide is trying some life style changes. These include being active during the day, exposure to sunlight, limiting alcohol and not falling asleep watching TV.

Senior Village offers a variety of activities for its members that are fun and may help with sleeping issues. You can get out of the house to enjoy the monthly birthday luncheon, bingo, book club and Game Day. Once the weather is cooler, putters and bocce ball will resume. So, lots of opportunities for fun activities and a good, safe way to be tired at the end of the day.

Call 520-314-1042 or log on to <http://www.seniorvillageatsaddlebrooke.org> for more details about any of our programs or to become a member or volunteer. Annual membership is \$48 for a single and \$60 for a household which entitles each person to 72 services a year (transportation, fix-its around the house and social activities).