

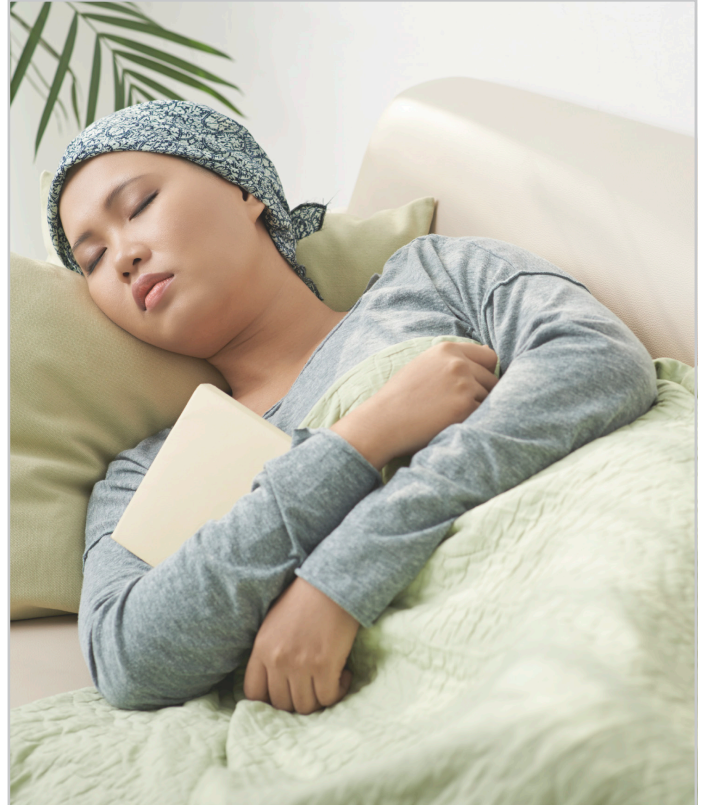
SLEEP & CANCER

i Quick Facts:

Fewer hours of sleep and poor sleep quality have been linked to many medical conditions including cancer. Sleep problems may be caused by the emotional toll of a cancer diagnosis, the physical impact of its treatment, and the side effects of medications. Disrupted sleep can linger long after cancer treatment ends. Quality sleep is needed for healing, good immune function, and mental health. Poor sleep can impair quality of life, ability to fight infections, and recover from treatments.

KEY POINTS:

- **Cancer and its treatment may cause or worsen insomnia and other sleep problems**
- **Common factors linked to poor sleep include physical and emotional symptoms from cancer and its treatments such as pain, nausea, fatigue, anxiety and depression.**
- **Managing the physical and emotional causes of poor sleep and using good sleep habits can improve sleep while dealing with cancer.**
- **It is important to talk with healthcare providers about sleep problems caused by cancer.**



? How Can I Learn More?

- Talk to your board-certified sleep medicine physician.
- Visit www.sleepeducation.org

! Am I At Risk:

- People who experience pain, nausea, fatigue or other symptoms from cancer and treatment may have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Steroids prescribed to ease chemotherapy-related nausea and vomiting may cause insomnia.
- Menopause brought on by cancer treatments can cause or worsen sleep problems.
- Cancer treatments often cause daytime fatigue. Napping or sleeping during the day can lead to difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep at night.
- Worry, anxiety, and depression can interfere with sleep.
- Lack of exercise or reduced physical activity can affect sleep quality.

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

Most people need at least 7 hours of sleep a night. As the body repairs itself during cancer treatment, the need for sleep may increase.

Poor sleep can be an unwanted side effect of cancer treatments. Medications prescribed to reduce the side effects of surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy can also impact sleep quantity and quality.

Sleep-disrupting side effects include:

- Fatigue
- Pain
- Night sweats or hot flashes
- Nausea and other problems such as diarrhea and constipation
- Worry, anxiety and depression

TIPS:

Good sleep habits include keeping a regular sleep schedule, avoiding stimulants and alcohol near bedtime, turning off electronic devices in the bedroom, and providing a comfortable place to sleep. Other tips for those with cancer include:

- Physical activity can help promote healthy sleep and lessen fatigue.
- If pain is the problem, take prescribed medication and implement other pain control strategies as directed, particularly before bedtime.
- Sleeping in layers of clothing and bedding can reduce the sleep disruption from night sweats or hot flashes.
- If nausea, diarrhea or constipation interferes with sleep, discuss these problems with your doctor.
- Avoid stressful activities just before you go to bed and create a soothing bedtime routine.

➔ Next Steps:

- It is important to talk with your doctor about your sleep concerns. Be sure to mention it to your doctor if poor sleep interferes with daytime activities and your ability to function.
- Get tested for sleep disorders such as sleep apnea if recommended by your doctor.
- Review all your cancer treatments, medications, and herbal aids with your doctor and talk about how to manage sleep-related side effects.



Questions For Your Physician

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your doctor.



Sample Questions:

Why do I feel tired all the time?

Can my cancer treatment disrupt my sleep?



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