

Side Effects - Sleep problems

Sleeping well is important for your physical and mental health. It not only helps you think clearly, it lowers your blood pressure, helps your appetite and strengthens your immune system. Sleep problems are common among people being treated for cancer. Some health benefits of sleep are: improved health and memory, lower stress, maintaining a healthy weight, improved creativity and a sharpened attention span.


Sleep problems that go on for a long time may increase the risk of anxiety or depression. Your provider will do an assessment, which may include a polysomnogram (recordings taken during sleep that show brain waves, breathing rate and others activities such as heart rate) to correctly diagnose and treat sleep problems. Assessments may be repeated from time to time, since sleeping problems may change.

There are steps that you can take to help you sleep well again.

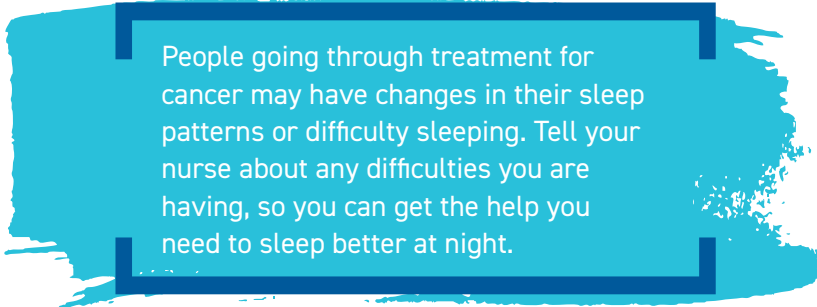
- **Tell your provider about problems that interfere with sleep.** Getting treatment to lower side effects such as pain or bladder or gastrointestinal problems may help.
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and relaxation therapy may help.** A CBT therapist can help you learn to change negative thoughts and beliefs about sleep into positive ones. Strategies such as muscle relaxation, guided imagery and self-hypnosis may also help you.
- **Set good bedtime habits.** Try sleeping in a quiet and dark comfortable setting. If you do not fall asleep, get out of bed and return to bed when you are sleepy. Stop watching television or using other electrical devices a couple of hours before bed. Don't drink or eat a lot before bedtime. Exercising near bedtime may make sleep more difficult.
- **Sleep medicine may be prescribed.** Sleep medicine prescribed will depend on your specific problem as well as other medicines you are taking.

Talk with your health care team

- Why am I having trouble sleeping?
- What problems should I call you about?
- What steps can I take to sleep better?
- Would you recommend a sleep therapist who could help with the problems I am having?
- Would sleep medicine be advised for me?



For more information, call our Sleep Center at 320-251-0726.



People going through treatment for cancer may have changes in their sleep patterns or difficulty sleeping. Tell your nurse about any difficulties you are having, so you can get the help you need to sleep better at night.