

HOW TO HELP SENIORS THROUGH SUNDOWNERS SYNDROME



Sundowners Syndrome

Mood changes are common for aging adults and often accompany health problems. Seniors with memory-related illnesses like dementia or Alzheimer's disease are especially prone to challenges resulting from mood changes. ([NCBI](#))

About Sundowners Syndrome



One common mood issue among seniors with memory-related illnesses is sundowners syndrome.

Sundowners Syndrome is:

- Not a disease, but a common behavior pattern noticed by medical staff and caregivers
- A change in mood occurring in the late afternoon, evening, or night
- Spotted by symptoms of stress, anxiety, restlessness, confusion, and/or aggression
- Most common among seniors with dementia or Alzheimer's disease
- Worsened by poor lighting, fatigue, or a disrupted schedule

([Senior Living](#))

Triggers of Sundowners Syndrome

To help minimize triggers, avoid:

- Dim or changing lighting
- Disruptions to routines
- Unhealthy diets
- Exciting, energizing activities later in the day
- Loud noises and music
- Argumentative or commanding tones

([Medical News Today](#))

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Sundowners Syndrome

Tips for Managing Sundowners Syndrome

While most people seem to calm down later in the day, seniors with memory-related issues experiencing sundowners syndrome tend to get more active. There are several ways to help seniors through this challenge.



Support Sleep

Since disruptions to schedules and lack of sleep can exacerbate sundowners syndrome, it is important to support seniors getting good sleep. A solid routine and supplements like melatonin can help.

Use Lighting

Dimming lights seem to be one of the triggers of sundowners syndrome, so it can be helpful to plan to turn more lights on later in the day and keep them on until bedtime. Closing the blinds while lights are on can also minimize symptoms.



Be a Calming Presence

To help seniors' moods stabilize, caregivers should be a calming presence. Limit alcohol intake and activity later in the day. Remain calm if mood swings begin. Remind seniors what time it is and what their schedule holds. This helps seniors to relax despite feelings of confusion or anxiety they may be facing.

(WebMD)

Mental Health Among Seniors

According to the World Health Organization, about 15% of seniors live with mental disorders. Some of the top mental challenges seniors face include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Dementia
- Alzheimer's Disease

(WHO)



Home Care Tip

Careful and consistent communication between caregivers is important for seniors who face sundowners syndrome. This ensures routines are kept, which can alleviate symptoms.