

Managing Sleep Problems In Persons With Dementia



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Sleep problems are common in older adults. As we age, the body's natural sleep cycle becomes less sensitive and older people especially with dementia may have trouble telling day and night apart. Older persons require about 6 to 8 hours of sleep. This may vary and be less when an older person is less active.

Causes of Sleep Problems:

Physical

- Medical conditions.
- Cognitive decline and sleep cycle of older person becoming disordered.
- Lack of activity and stimulation during the day.
- Lack of exercise.
- Hunger

Poor Sleep Hygiene

- No regular sleep routine.
- Spending too much time in bed during the day – bed is not associated with sleep.
- Sleeping too much during the day.
- Overstimulation before bedtime.
- Caffeine consumption before bed.

Environment

- Too cold or too hot.
- Insufficient exposure to sunlight during the day.
- Bedroom is not conducive for sleep.
- New environment.



What Can I Do?

During The Day

- Regular exercise.
- Schedule activities to occupy them.
- Avoid taking too many naps.
- Spend less time in bed during the day.
- Have a regular sleep routine including regular waking and sleeping times.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.

At Bedtime

- Give them a snack if they are hungry.
- Check that they are not too warm or too cold.
- Give a back rub or leg massage before bed.
- Play soft, soothing music at the bedside.
- Have a sleep routine/ritual – changing into pyjamas, inviting them to lay out their blanket.
- Have a familiar, comfort item in bed e.g. comfort pillow.

What About Sleeping Pills?

- Sleeping pills should only be used if prescribed by a doctor.
- They only work for a short period of time.
- There are side effects of these medications and there is a risk of addiction.
- It is better to improve sleeping and bedtime habits.

Why Do Behaviour Problems Tend To Occur At Sunset?

Some people with moderate to severe dementia become agitated towards the evening. This is known as 'sundowning'.

Strategies To Cope With 'Sundowning'

- Distract your loved one with activities such as playing music, craftwork, taking a walk or watching television.
- Close the curtains so they do not see the darkness outside.
- Turn on the lights to brighten the room.
- Reduce noise and unnecessary activity around the person to calm them down.

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This information has been prepared by the Memory Clinic at Alexandra Hospital (AH). The AH Memory Clinic offers comprehensive assessment, support and management of those with memory problems through a multi-disciplinary team.

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Contact Us

24-HR Urgent Care Centre

Location

Block 6, Level 1

Operating Hours

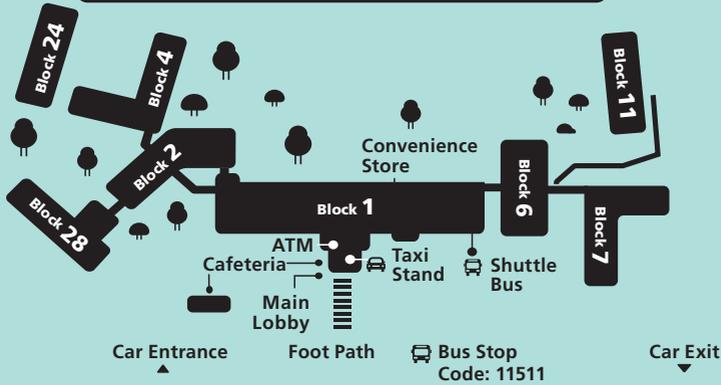
24 hours, 7 days a week

Main Line

Contact Number

+65 6472 2000

How to Get Around Alexandra Hospital



Block 1

Level 1

- Clinic F, Clinical Measurement Centre
- Pharmacy

Level 2

- Clinic J, Integrated Care Clinic
 - Gynaecology Clinic
 - Outpatient Infusion Centre (OPIC)
 - Podiatry
- Clinic K, Healthy Ageing Clinic
 - Dietetics
 - General Surgery Clinic
 - Palliative Clinic
 - Physiotherapy
 - Rehabilitation & Restorative Medicine Clinic
 - Staff Clinic
 - Urology Clinic
 - Vascular Clinic

Level 3

- Ward 7

Block 2

Level 1

- Clinic D, Dental Centre
- Clinic E
 - Anaesthesia Outpatient Consultation Clinic
 - Orthopaedic Centre

Level 3

- Day Surgery Operating Theatre (DSOT)

Block 4

Level 1

- Ambulatory Surgery Centre
- Endoscopy Centre
- Rehabilitation 1

Level 2

- Wards 2 and 3

Level 3

- Wards 4 and 5

Block 6

Level 1

- Diagnostic Imaging 2 (DI 2)
- 24-HR Urgent Care Centre

Level 2

- Diagnostic Imaging 3 (DI 3)
- Major Operating Theatres 1 and 2 (MOT 1 & 2)

Level 3

- Intensive Care Unit 1 (ICU 1)
- Major Operating Theatres 3 and 4 (MOT 3 & 4)

Block 7

Level 1

- Wards 8 and 9

Level 2

- Wards 10 and 11

Level 3

- Wards 12 and 13

Block 11

Level 1

- Rehabilitation 2

Block 28

Level 1

- Care and Counselling
- Clinic A, Ear, Nose and Throat Centre (ENT Centre)

Level 2

- Clinic B, Eye Surgery Centre

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions. Information is accurate at time of printing (March 2021) and subject to revision without prior notice.

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