

## **Effects of Aging on Sleep**

A change in the sleep pattern is a part of the normal aging process. As one ages over 60-65, it is harder to fall asleep and more difficult to stay asleep. Sleep needs and time do not decline with age; however, older people spend more time in lighter than in the deep stages of the sleep cycle. Melatonin hormone synthesis and secretion decrease with older age, affecting the pattern of the sleep stages. Compared to the young, older people tend to sleep early and wake up early in the morning. This pattern is called advanced sleep phase syndrome. These changes in sleep are not clearly understood. In case the advanced phase sleep is interfering with the daily routine of life, it can be treated by bright light therapy to postpone sleep time.

A higher incidence of insomnia in older adults may also be due to physical illnesses like arthritis, acid reflux, prostate enlargement, and prescription medications.