

WEBVTT Kind: captions Language: en

00:00:00.090 --> 00:00:02.670 - My name is Brienne Miner, and I'm assistant professor

00:00:02.670 --> 00:00:05.430 at Yale University in the section of geriatrics.

00:00:05.430 --> 00:00:07.890 I've also done training in sleep medicine.

00:00:07.890 --> 00:00:10.590 And today, I'm gonna talk about sleep and aging

00:00:10.590 --> 00:00:13.170 and I'm gonna cover the different ways

00:00:13.170 --> 00:00:15.480 that sleep might change as we age,

00:00:15.480 --> 00:00:17.010 all of the different factors

00:00:17.010 --> 00:00:19.860 that might be causing sleep problems as we get older,

00:00:19.860 --> 00:00:21.780 and when you should speak with your doctor

00:00:21.780 --> 00:00:23.564 about a sleep problem.

00:00:25.920 --> 00:00:30.000 Most people think that as you get older you need less sleep.

00:00:30.000 --> 00:00:34.020 But if we look at how much sleep is recommended,

00:00:34.020 --> 00:00:36.900 it really doesn't change from middle to older age.

00:00:36.900 --> 00:00:38.640 So middle-aged adults,

00:00:38.640 --> 00:00:40.980 according to the National Sleep Foundation,

00:00:40.980 --> 00:00:43.590 should be getting, the real sort of sweet spot

00:00:43.590 --> 00:00:46.170 is seven to nine hours.

00:00:46.170 --> 00:00:50.220 And in adults 65 and older it's seven to eight hours.

00:00:50.220 --> 00:00:52.860 So you know, we do recognize that a little bit

00:00:52.860 --> 00:00:55.680 on either side, so five hours or up to nine hours

00:00:55.680 --> 00:00:57.180 may be appropriate.

00:00:57.180 --> 00:01:00.150 But I think the interesting thing is that

00:01:00.150 --> 00:01:02.730 if you compare middle-aged and older age adults,

00:01:02.730 --> 00:01:05.430 the recommendation for how much sleep you should be getting

00:01:05.430 --> 00:01:06.420 is the same.

00:01:09.480 --> 00:01:13.680 As we get older, there are probably multiple things going on

00:01:13.680 --> 00:01:15.840 at the same time that might impact our sleep.
 00:01:15.840 --> 00:01:19.620 So I like to think about what medical conditions
 00:01:19.620 --> 00:01:22.230 or medications a patient of mine might be taking
 00:01:22.230 --> 00:01:24.450 and how that might affect their sleep.
 00:01:24.450 --> 00:01:27.270 Medical conditions could certainly cause pain
 00:01:27.270 --> 00:01:29.430 or other sleep disruptive symptoms.
 00:01:29.430 --> 00:01:31.350 People can be on medications
 00:01:31.350 --> 00:01:34.830 that could make them very sleepy during the day.
 00:01:34.830 --> 00:01:36.750 Those medications could make it hard for them
 00:01:36.750 --> 00:01:38.070 to sleep at night.
 00:01:38.070 --> 00:01:41.580 Or interestingly, those medications might cause
 00:01:41.580 --> 00:01:44.040 or worsen an underlying sleep disorder.
 00:01:44.040 --> 00:01:46.980 In terms of behavioral factors,
 00:01:46.980 --> 00:01:50.190 we like to think about having good sleep hygiene,
 00:01:50.190 --> 00:01:52.500 having good behaviors around sleeping.
 00:01:52.500 --> 00:01:55.230 And so those are basic things like going to bed
 00:01:55.230 --> 00:01:57.330 at the same time every night,
 00:01:57.330 --> 00:01:59.610 getting up at the same time every morning,
 00:01:59.610 --> 00:02:01.650 avoiding napping during the day,
 00:02:01.650 --> 00:02:04.470 especially if you have trouble sleeping at night,
 00:02:04.470 --> 00:02:06.450 and a big one that I like to touch on
 00:02:06.450 --> 00:02:09.270 is what substances might contribute to sleep.
 00:02:09.270 --> 00:02:13.290 So alcohol, especially as you get older,
 00:02:13.290 --> 00:02:15.900 can cause more problems with sleep
 00:02:15.900 --> 00:02:19.320 because your body is not as good at metabolizing
 alcohol
 00:02:19.320 --> 00:02:23.760 as you get older, and you can't drink the same
 amount
 00:02:23.760 --> 00:02:25.800 in your older age that you could in your middle
 age.
 00:02:25.800 --> 00:02:30.060 Caffeine, same story as alcohol, and nicotine as
 well

00:02:30.060 --> 00:02:31.920 can make it hard to fall asleep,
00:02:31.920 --> 00:02:34.290 can make it hard to stay asleep.
00:02:34.290 --> 00:02:37.500 Other things like being socially isolated,
00:02:37.500 --> 00:02:39.270 I think we've all been thinking a lot about that
00:02:39.270 --> 00:02:42.360 especially in the setting of COVID.
00:02:42.360 --> 00:02:45.210 So why does social isolation cause problems with
sleep?
00:02:45.210 --> 00:02:48.810 Well, you're less physically active during the day
00:02:48.810 --> 00:02:50.310 and that can make it harder
00:02:50.310 --> 00:02:53.190 to have a normal sleep/wake schedule.
00:02:53.190 --> 00:02:56.070 And those social interactions are actually also
00:02:56.070 --> 00:02:58.650 very important for giving cues to our body
00:02:58.650 --> 00:03:01.320 to help help us maintain a normal sleep/wake
rhythm.
00:03:01.320 --> 00:03:04.410 And then I would be remiss if I didn't mention
what we think
00:03:04.410 --> 00:03:06.810 about a lot in sleep medicine, which is that almost
all
00:03:06.810 --> 00:03:09.600 of the sleep disorders that are out there
00:03:09.600 --> 00:03:11.940 become more common as we age.
00:03:11.940 --> 00:03:14.730 So people in their older age could have
00:03:14.730 --> 00:03:17.407 multiple things going on at the same time.
00:03:19.380 --> 00:03:22.020 One of the major changes that's normal
00:03:22.020 --> 00:03:24.810 and is not necessarily a sign of disease
00:03:24.810 --> 00:03:29.460 is that many older people prefer to go to bed
earlier
00:03:29.460 --> 00:03:30.540 and wake up earlier.
00:03:30.540 --> 00:03:34.230 So as opposed to going to bed at maybe say 10 or
11 o'clock,
00:03:34.230 --> 00:03:37.623 some people may have a preference to go to bed
at seven
00:03:37.623 --> 00:03:42.390 or 8:00 PM, and that's because there's a change
00:03:42.390 --> 00:03:45.450 in the timing of melatonin release from our brain.

00:03:45.450 --> 00:03:49.500 So melatonin is sort of setting that time for us.

00:03:49.500 --> 00:03:52.620 And in many older people, our brain releases melatonin

00:03:52.620 --> 00:03:53.733 in an earlier time.

00:03:54.780 --> 00:03:59.640 So again, it's not necessarily a problem

00:03:59.640 --> 00:04:04.140 except that many people don't like to go to bed at 7:00 PM

00:04:04.140 --> 00:04:07.920 or wake up at three or four o'clock in the morning.

00:04:07.920 --> 00:04:11.460 So I would say, if your preference is to go to bed

00:04:11.460 --> 00:04:14.163 at 8:00 PM, there's no problem with that.

00:04:15.360 --> 00:04:18.930 But you wouldn't want to, or it would be normal then

00:04:18.930 --> 00:04:21.810 to wake up at three or four o'clock in the morning.

00:04:21.810 --> 00:04:23.670 That's still a normal amount of sleep.

00:04:23.670 --> 00:04:25.230 So there's actually no problem with that

00:04:25.230 --> 00:04:27.783 unless it's a problem for your schedule.

00:04:29.850 --> 00:04:33.720 So some important takeaways about sleep as we age,

00:04:33.720 --> 00:04:37.170 are first that the timing of sleep may change.

00:04:37.170 --> 00:04:40.470 So older adults may find that they have a preference

00:04:40.470 --> 00:04:43.143 to go to bed earlier and therefore wake up earlier.

00:04:44.700 --> 00:04:48.870 The amount of interruptions or arousals from sleep

00:04:48.870 --> 00:04:50.850 become more frequent as we get older.

00:04:50.850 --> 00:04:52.920 But as long as they're brief and you're able

00:04:52.920 --> 00:04:55.020 to get back to sleep, that's not a problem.

00:04:55.020 --> 00:04:57.210 And then finally, I would say there could be

00:04:57.210 --> 00:05:01.680 a lot of things contributing to sleep problems in older age,

00:05:01.680 --> 00:05:04.950 but I look at that as a glass half full kind of person.

00:05:04.950 --> 00:05:06.750 When somebody comes to me with a sleep problem,

00:05:06.750 --> 00:05:10.440 I think there are a lot of things we could do to help sleep,
00:05:10.440 --> 00:05:14.580 whether it has to do with medical conditions, medications,
00:05:14.580 --> 00:05:17.730 behaviors or treating an underlying sleep disorder.
00:05:17.730 --> 00:05:20.460 So I think that's an important takeaway.
00:05:20.460 --> 00:05:22.440 If you do have a sleep problem,
00:05:22.440 --> 00:05:23.640 you should talk to your doctor,
00:05:23.640 --> 00:05:25.740 you should get an evaluation, and there might be
00:05:25.740 --> 00:05:28.410 a lot of options for you that don't necessarily mean
00:05:28.410 --> 00:05:30.601 having to take another medication.