A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy lines in shades of purple, blue, and teal. These lines flow horizontally across the middle of the page, creating a sense of movement and depth. They are set against a dark blue circular background that is part of a larger design.

Quality Sleep for Older Adults: An Easy How-To Guide

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From a young age, you've known and been told that a good night's sleep is extremely important. Sleep doesn't just help us stay productive during the day. It can also improve cognitive function, and keep health problems at bay. However, enjoying a healthy night of sleep is easier said than done — especially for older adults. Anything from an irregular work schedule to a sleep disorder can prevent you from getting quality sleep.

In this whitepaper, we'll go over what quality sleep is, why it's important and steps you can take to ensure you're getting healthy, quality sleep for your age.



What is Quality Sleep?

It's important to understand what constitutes a healthy sleep routine. Let's look at the three main factors that shape quality sleep.

Amount
of Sleep

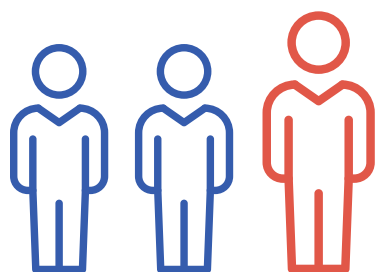
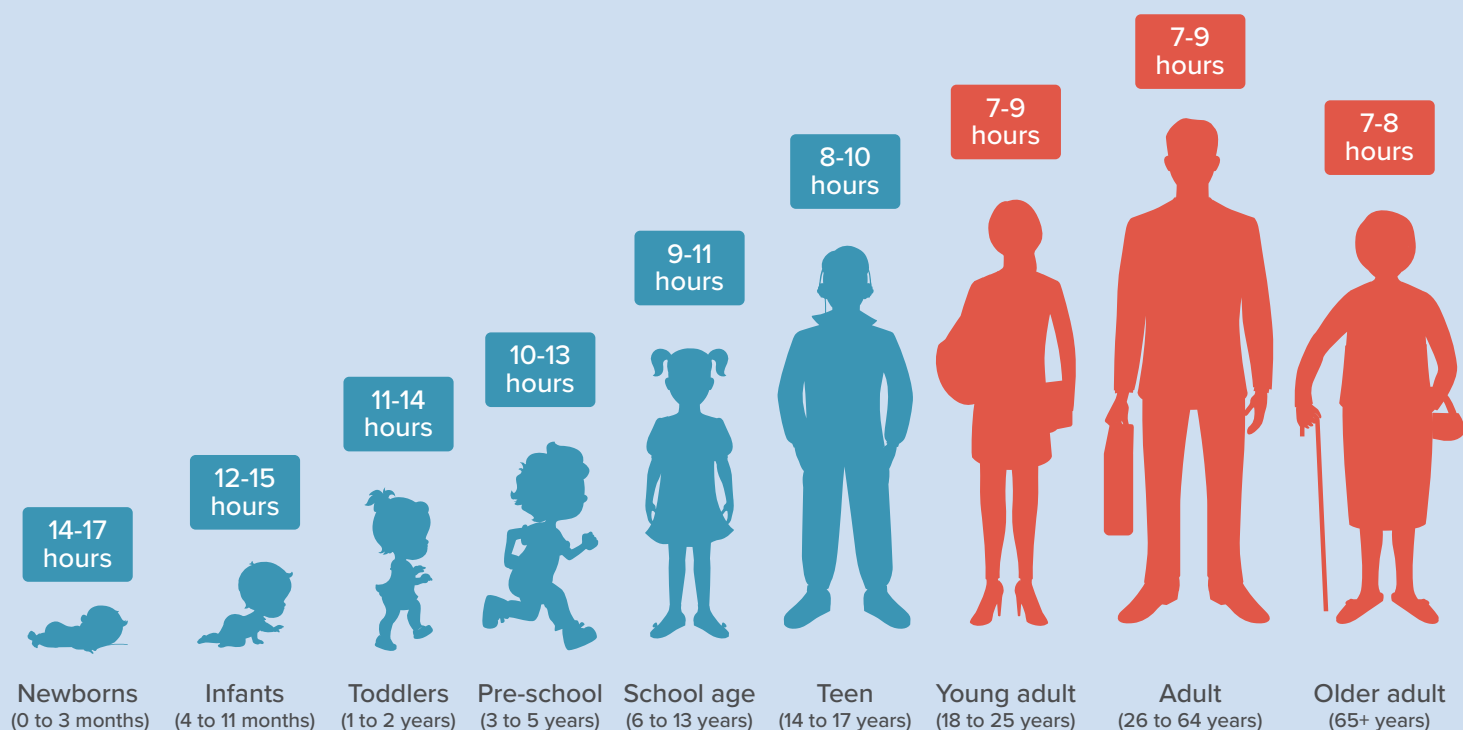
Uninterrupted
Sleep

Sleep
Consistency

Amount of Sleep

The first element of quality sleep is the number of hours you're getting per night. According to a report by the [National Sleep Foundation](#),

the optimal amount of sleep per age group is as follows:



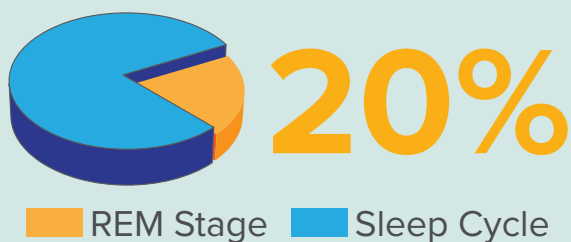
If you're having problems with your sleep schedule, you're not alone. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), approximately **1 in 3 Americans** don't get the amount of sleep they need.



Uninterrupted Sleep

It is not uncommon for older adults to experience sleep interruptions, making sleep less refreshing and of lower quality. Furthermore, if you're not staying asleep, you may not reach the most important stage of sleep: the REM cycle.

REM (rapid eye movement) sleep is a stage that kicks in about [90 minutes](#) after you've fallen asleep, and repeats several times throughout the duration of your sleep. **REM sleep helps improve both mental and physical health, by stimulating areas of the brain associated with learning, and encourages the production of various proteins.** Overall, the REM stage makes up about 20% of your sleep cycle. The more interrupted your sleep is, the less REM sleep you'll receive.



Sleep Consistency

The final factor contributing to quality sleep is the consistency of your sleep schedule. Our bodies naturally follow a circadian rhythm called the [sleep-wake cycle](#). Put simply, this is an internal biological cycle that follows the natural light-dark cycle of our outdoor environments. Our bodies are designed to wake up when it's light out, then to go to sleep when nights hits.

Over time, your circadian rhythm may adjust to suit your precise sleep schedule. However, if your sleep schedule changes every day, it becomes difficult for your body to follow a rhythm. This makes it challenging to fall asleep, as well as to wake up when you intend to.

Why Is Quality Sleep Important?

In addition to making you well-rested and productive, quality sleep is important for your health. During a night of sleep, your brain and body slow down, and begin the process of recovery. This includes repairing cells, producing hormones and restoring energy.

Benefits of Quality Sleep



Improved memory and concentration



Improved athletic performance



Better mood



Heightened immune system



Reduced risk of obesity and diabetes



Reduced high blood pressure

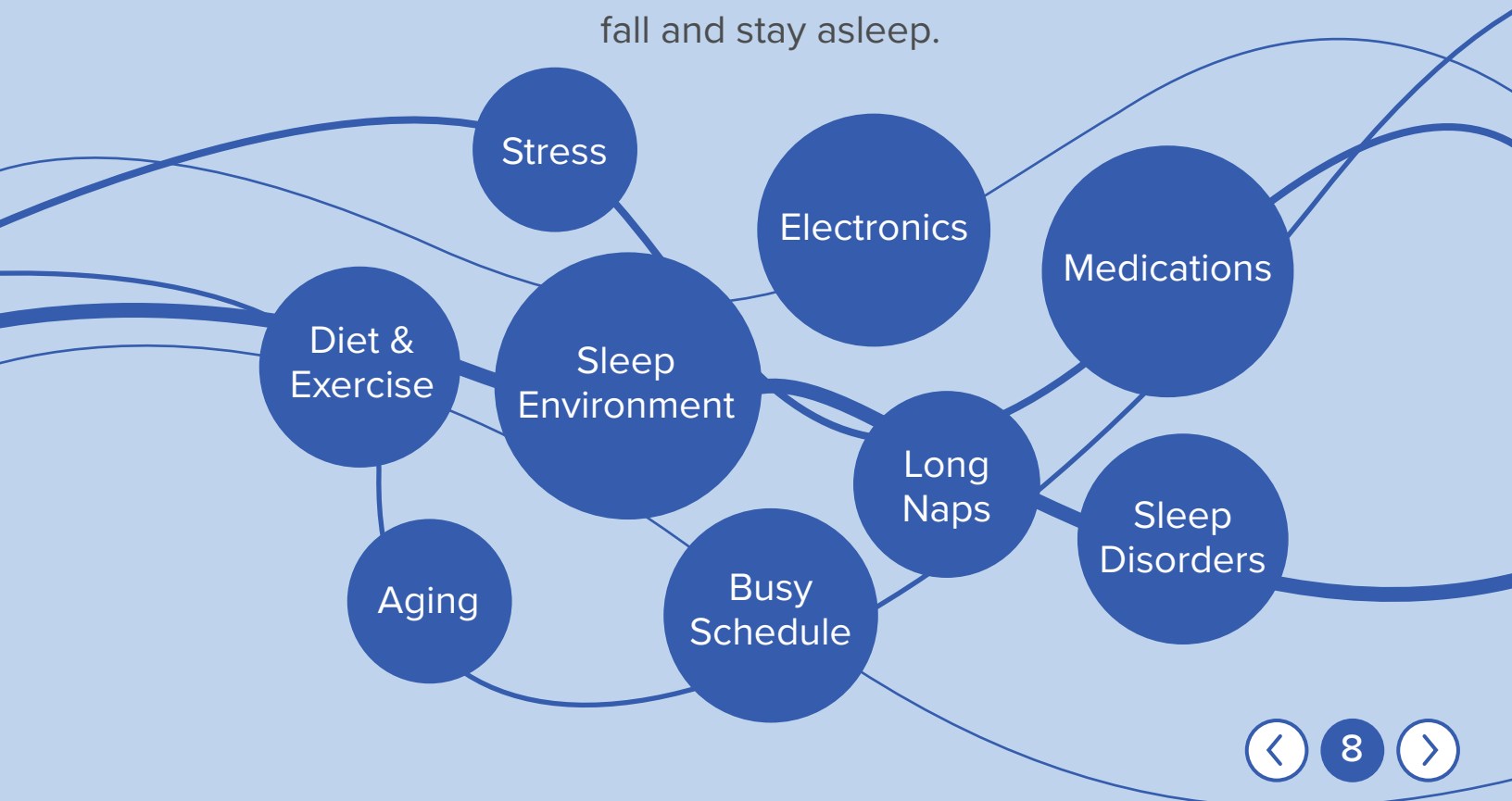
Cost of Poor Sleep

When you don't get quality sleep, your body doesn't have enough time to perform essential processes. This negatively impacts your physical and mental health, and also increases your chances of developing obesity and cardiovascular health conditions.



What Can Negatively Affect Sleep?

Here are some factors that many older adults experience and may be negatively impacting your ability to fall and stay asleep.



Stress ○

Over [40% of adults](#) lie awake at night due to stress. Although it's normal to feel stressed every now and then, chronic stress can greatly affect your chances of falling asleep. This is because stress encourages the nervous system to enter a heightened state of arousal, making you more alert.

Over **40%**
of adults lie
awake at night due to stress



Sleep Environment ○

To fall asleep quickly, you need to create an optimal environment. Things like loud noises, uncomfortable temperatures and excessive light can be distracting, making it difficult to fall asleep. You're more likely to experience these problems if you live with a roommate or in a crowded area.

Diet & Exercise ○

Diet and exercise play an integral role in overall health, so it's no surprise they can also impact your sleep. Consuming substances with caffeine, such as coffee, tea and energy drinks, make it harder to fall asleep. Similarly, not getting enough exercise or [working out too intensely too close to bedtime](#) can impair sleep.

Electronics ○

While it may be tempting to scroll through your phone before bed, using electronics at night can make it harder to sleep. Smartphones, laptops and electronic devices emit blue light that disrupts the production of [melatonin](#), a hormone that helps you sleep consistently.



Medications

Many medications [alter chemicals and hormones](#) in your body. Sometimes, these changes can trigger insomnia. For example, certain high blood pressure medications, such as Alpha-blockers, relax the muscles to improve urine flow, making users wake up more often to use the bathroom. Other medications like Beta-blockers disrupt sleep by affecting the production of melatonin. Even non-prescription medications can interfere with your sleep — many over-the-counter cold medicines, for instance, contain caffeine.

Busy Schedule

A study conducted by [European Heart Journal](#) revealed that the healthiest time to go to bed is around 10:00 every night. However, depending on your schedule, this may not be possible. People who work night shifts, study late or have young children may not be able to sleep early. They're also at greater risk of having disrupted circadian rhythms.

Sleep Disorders

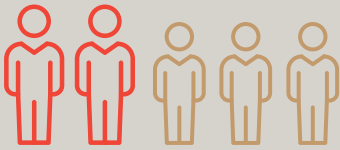
Anything from stress to genetics can increase your likelihood of developing a sleep disorder, which is a condition that affects the amount, consistency and/or quality of sleep you receive. Common sleep disorders include:

- Insomnia disorder: Associated with difficulty falling asleep
- Sleep apnea: Causes airway obstructions that disrupt sleep
- REM sleep behavior disorder: Involves actively responding to dreams by talking and moving
- Restless legs syndrome: Creates an uncontrollable urge to move the legs while sleeping
- Narcolepsy: Causes sleep to occur at random moments

These conditions are becoming increasingly common — it's reported that **about [70 million Americans](#) have some sort of sleep disorder.**

Long Naps ○

Napping is a common activity — in a typical day, approximately [one-third of Americans](#) take a nap. Older men nap more than other demographics, with over 40% of men aged 50+ reporting taking naps.

Over **40%** of men aged  **50+** reporting taking naps

Generally, napping is a beneficial activity. By getting some extra rest, you can boost productivity, improve your mood and strengthen your memory and reaction times. However, if you nap for too long, you may experience some unwanted side effects, such as the following:

- Sleep inertia (grogginess)
- Difficulty falling asleep at night
- Increased risk of disease

The most common consequence of napping is sleep inertia or grogginess. Napping for too long can be disorienting, inadvertently making you more tired. Additionally, if your nap is late in the day, it can affect your ability to fall asleep later on. Finally, recent studies suggest that [long naps](#) are linked to problems like cardiovascular disease. **To prevent these issues, you should:**

Nap for less than
30 minutes
and before **3 p.m.**



Aging ○

As you age, your body's internal clock naturally shifts. As a consequence, older adults often begin to feel tired in the afternoon and get up earlier. Older adults are also [more likely to wake up frequently](#) throughout the night, which affects sleep quality.



How to Get Quality Sleep for Older Adults

Over time, a lack of good sleep leads to health problems that can lower your quality of life. Those who are over 55 years old or already have sleep disorders are most likely to be affected.

If you want to get more quality sleep, here are a few steps you can take.

Maintain
Good Sleep
Hygiene

Practice
Healthy Diet
Habits

Exercise
Regularly

Minimize
Stress

Sleep
Enhancing
Products

Maintain Good Sleep Hygiene

One of the simplest ways to increase quality sleep is by improving your sleep hygiene. Good sleep hygiene involves maintaining a routine and environment that encourage a healthy, quality sleep schedule. This may include:



Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day



Avoiding substances with caffeine and other stimulants



Limiting electronics use at night



Making your bedroom quiet and dark



Limiting naps to under 30 minutes

Don't attempt to make several big changes simultaneously. Instead, introduce these adjustments gradually over time.

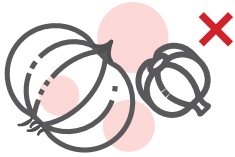


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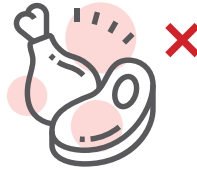


Practice Healthy Diet Habits

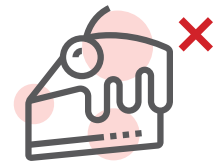
It's common knowledge that substances like alcohol and caffeine impair your ability to sleep properly. But, did you know that even healthy foods can disrupt your sleep? To lower your chances of waking up at night, try to avoid the following:



Acidic foods
(like. garlic, onions and
tomatoes)



High-fat foods (like but-
ter, cheese and fatty
meats)



Spicy and sugary
foods

While you don't have to cut these foods out of your diet entirely, you should minimize how often you consume them. You should also try not to eat too late in the day. If your digestive system is processing food late at night, you may end up tossing and turning.

Exercise Regularly

Studies show there's a link between [physical activity and sleep](#).

Maintaining a regular exercise routine can improve sleep duration and quality while reducing the amount of time it takes to fall asleep. The following exercises are especially beneficial:



Aerobic exercise



Resistance exercise



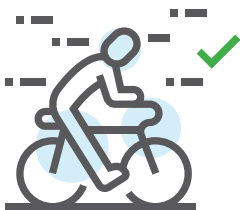
Yoga

Even just 30 minutes of moderate exercise every day can help improve your sleep routine.



Minimize Stress

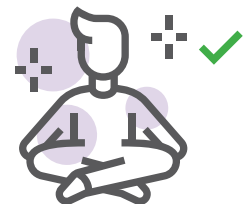
Adults of all ages [experience unhealthy stress levels](#). As mentioned earlier, stress can disrupt sleep patterns by making the brain more alert. When you're feeling more anxious than usual, try lowering your stress levels through the following lifestyle changes:



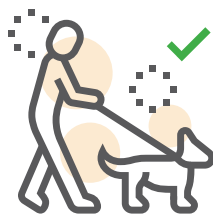
Exercising



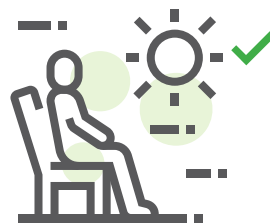
Maintaining a healthy diet



Practicing meditation



Going on walks



Relaxing

If your stress levels feel overwhelming, you may want to speak to a counselor.



Use Sleep Enhancing Products

While lifestyle changes can help improve sleep patterns, they're not always enough. Depending on the severity of your sleep issues, you may also benefit from one of the following [sleep enhancing products](#):

- ✓ **Weighted blankets:** Weighted blankets rely on [deep pressure stimulation](#) to boost melatonin levels.
- ✓ **White noise machines:** These machines produce white noise that can help you [fall asleep 38% faster](#).
- ✓ **Eye masks:** By blocking out light, eye masks can increase the [length of REM sleep](#).
- ✓ **Down pillows:** Down pillows, or pillows made with duck or goose feathers, provide enhanced comfort that encourages sleep.
- ✓ **Aromatherapy products:** Aromatherapy, which uses essential oils, may provide [respiratory disinfection and psychological benefits](#).

These products are great for people with high stress levels, busy schedules or insomnia. However, if you suspect that you have a more serious sleep disorder, you should see a doctor as you might need treatment with professional sleep equipment.

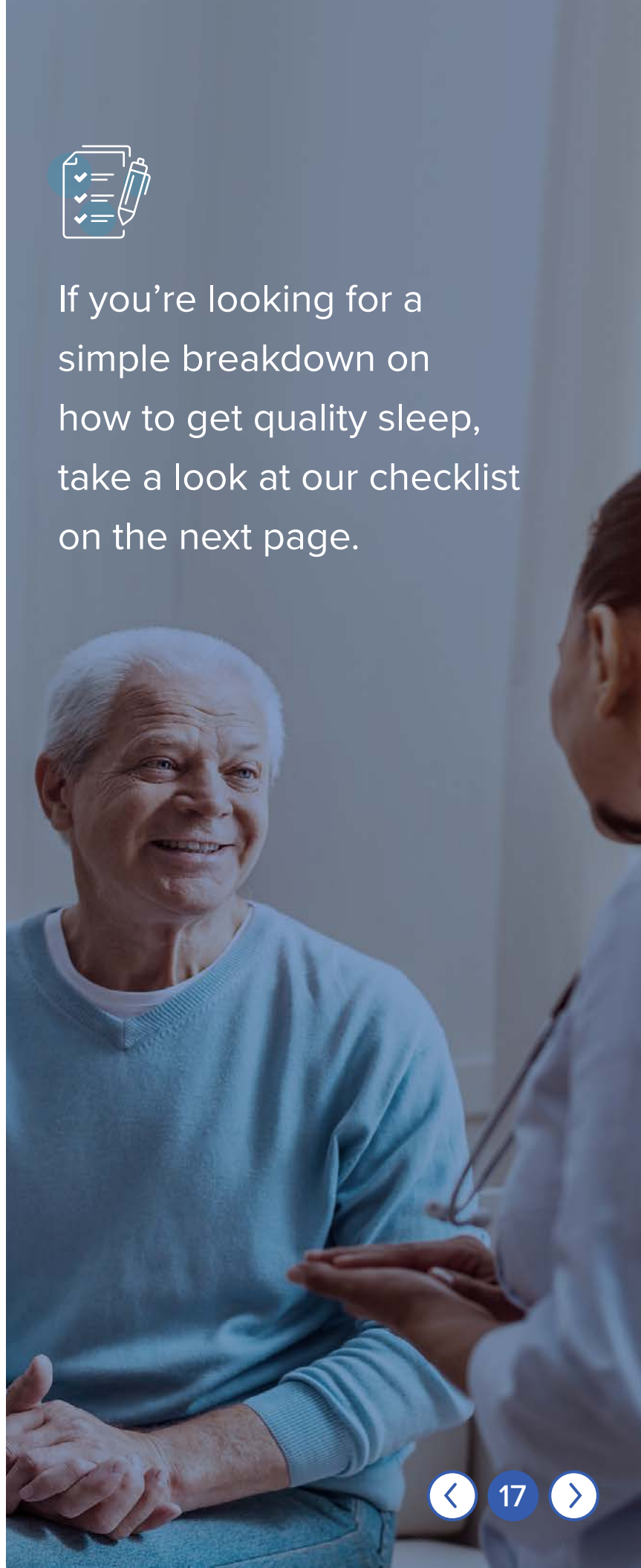
If you already know you have a sleep disorder and own sleep equipment, you're probably aware that it should be cleaned regularly, which can become a stress of its own. We recommend including [SoClean 3](#) in your daily routine. It gives you the peace of mind that you're taking the best possible care of your equipment and yourself.

There's no question that sleep is one of the most important bodily functions. When you consistently lose quality sleep, everything from your mood and memory to your concentration and health are negatively impacted.

Ultimately, our goal is to help older adults achieve the sleep they deserve through high-quality, comprehensive sleep maintenance.



If you're looking for a simple breakdown on how to get quality sleep, take a look at our checklist on the next page.



HOW TO GET QUALITY SLEEP CHECKLIST

Remember to introduce these adjustments gradually, and don't attempt to make several big changes simultaneously.

MAINTAIN GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE

- ☐ Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- ☐ Limit electronics use at night
- ☐ Make your bedroom quiet and dark
- ☐ Limit naps to under 30 minutes
- ☐ Avoid caffeine and other stimulants

PRACTICE HEALTHY DIET HABITS

- ☐ Avoid acidic foods
- ☐ Avoid high-fat foods
- ☐ Avoid spicy and sugary foods
- ☐ Do not eat within three hours of bedtime

EXERCISE REGULARLY

- ☐ Aerobic exercise
- ☐ Resistance exercise
- ☐ Yoga

MINIMIZE STRESS

- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Healthy diet
- ☐ Meditation
- ☐ Walks
- ☐ Relaxation time
- ☐ Make to-do lists to ease your mind

USE SLEEP-ENHANCING PRODUCTS

- ☐ Weighted blanket
- ☐ White noise machine
- ☐ Down pillows
- ☐ Eye masks
- ☐ Aromatherapy tools



A decorative graphic consisting of a series of overlapping, wavy lines that create a sense of motion and depth. The lines are colored in a gradient from purple on the left to blue on the right, and they are set against a dark blue circular background.

SoClean®

SoClean.com

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