



motion picture  
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# SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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## SLEEPING AND AGING

**Question:** I think my 71 year old mother has a sleeping problem. She doesn't agree, but if she wakes up to go to the bathroom during the night, she can't get back to sleep. She also wakes very early in the morning, sometimes as early as 3:00 AM. I often see her falling asleep in a chair in the living room or at the dinner table. What should I do?

**Answer:** I am glad you have noticed your mother's sleep patterns and you are concerned about them. I suggest you discuss the symptoms of insomnia with your mother and encourage her to see her physician. The National Sleep Foundation, a nonprofit organization supporting sleep research, reports symptoms of insomnia include:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Waking up frequently during the night
- Difficulty returning to sleep
- Waking up too early in the morning
- Daytime sleepiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability

Your mother may have symptoms associated with insomnia, but keep in mind our sleep schedules often change as we age. In fact, at age 60 adults begin to sleep less deeply. By age 70, adults have also decreased their nighttime sleep to an average of 6.6 hours. Insomnia does tend to increase with age, but usually sleep

disturbances later in life are due to pain, digestive problems, depression, anxiety, or other medical conditions.

It may not be easy to convince your mother to see her physician, but try to be patient. A poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation that focused on adults age 60 and older, found that 76% of those polled did not feel they had a sleeping problem and only 45% would report a sleeping problem to their physician if they thought they had one. Interestingly, 75% of all those polled reported at least one symptom associated with insomnia.

A few changes in your mother's daily routine, such as limiting herself to a 30 minute nap only in the early afternoon, eating a light evening meal, avoiding stressful tasks before bedtime or taking a brisk walk each day may help. Lastly, reassure your mother that her physician should know about her sleep patterns if she is taking any medications, because a number of medications do interfere with sleep.

Sources: [www.agingwellmag.com](http://www.agingwellmag.com), *New Perspectives on Elders' Sleep*, by Majd Alwan, PhD and David C. Mack, PhD; [www.caring.com](http://www.caring.com), *How to Sleep*, by Laurie Udesky; [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org), *Can't Sleep? What to Know about Insomnia*, reviewed by David N. Neubauer, MD, MA.

## JOKE OF THE MONTH

In 1900, fathers and sons would have heart-to-heart conversations while fishing in a stream. In 2010, fathers pluck the headphones off their sons' ears and shout, "WHEN YOU HAVE A MINUTE?"

— Source: *Aha! Jokes*, <http://www.AhaJokes.com>

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

### Go Green!

Receive the *Social Services Corner* by email.  
Call 888.994.3863, ext. 2370, or e-mail [info@wrmail.org](mailto:info@wrmail.org).

Do you or someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free at (888) 994-3863 or visit [www.wrpioneers.org](http://www.wrpioneers.org) to find out more about our assistance programs.



The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation.



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## STAY SAFE FROM HEAT STROKE WHEN HOT WEATHER HITS



As temperatures rise in the summer months, so does the risk of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Both are serious. Heat stroke can be deadly.

Heat exhaustion is more common. It typically strikes when people work or play strenuously in a hot, humid

environment, causing them to sweat excessively. With diminished fluids and salts, the body loses its ability to cool itself, resulting in symptoms, including dizziness, muscle cramps and pain, headache, nausea, and weakness.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition caused when the brain is unable to control the body's cooling

system. The rise in internal body temperature can result in damage to the brain and other organs. "Classic" heat stroke can develop over a period of days; "exertional" heat stroke strikes more quickly and primarily affects younger, more active persons.

The symptoms of heat stroke include loss of consciousness, confusion, hallucinations, hyperventilation, and flushed, hot, or dry skin. Seek medical help immediately if you suspect heat stroke.

Even in a case of heat exhaustion, consult with a physician, especially if the person loses consciousness, complains of chest or abdominal pain, has trouble keeping fluids down, or has a temperature of 104°F or higher. Heat stroke and heat exhaustion can hit anyone, but children and older people tend to be more susceptible, so keep a watch on your family when the weather turns hot.

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

**SNAPforSeniors®: [www.snapforseniors.com](http://www.snapforseniors.com), [info@snapforseniors.com](mailto:info@snapforseniors.com)**

This Seattle based corporation provides a free-on-line database of licensed senior housing in the U.S. as well as helpful senior housing information. Their comprehensive database offers listings for Assisted Living, Adult Family Homes, Residential Care, Alzheimer's Living, Independent Living, Skilled Nursing, Nursing Homes, Continuing Care, Medicare-Certified Home Health Care Providers and Home Health Care that can be searched by zip code or city and state. Their housing information includes a brochure, "Senior Housing: What You Need to Know," that can be downloaded for free, and informative articles to help seniors understand their housing options, how best to select their housing, and general news about senior housing. They also offer data licensing options to qualified organizations.



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“If you want to be successful, it's just this simple. Know what you are doing. Love what you are doing. And believe in what you are doing.”

— Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit [www.wrpioneers.org](http://www.wrpioneers.org).