

RECOGNIZING SUNDOWNERS SYNDROME (SUNDOWNING) IN THE ELDERLY

This time of the year is particularly segment of a large segment of the elderly population as they encounter Sundowners Syndrome. Helping the elderly and their caretakers to expand their understanding, recognizing symptoms of Sundowning and seeking help when indicated is a must.

Sundowners syndrome, or sundowning, is a state of confusion that occurs later in the afternoon and into the night. This state of confusion is most often found in patients who have [dementia](#) or [Alzheimer's disease](#) and is comprised of a range of behaviors including increased confusion, anxiety and aggression. Sometimes people with this condition tend to pace or wander, and they may ignore or not hear instructions.

Symptoms range in severity and tend to begin in early to late evening and may continue throughout the night. Some of these symptoms include:

- Sudden mood swings
- Anxiety

- Sadness
- Restlessness
- Energy surges
- Increased confusion
- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Violence

A Few of the Factors that can Aggravate Sundowners disease include:

- Fatigue or illness
- Low or dim lighting
- Presence of an infection such as a urinary tract infection ([UTI](#))
- Difficulty separating reality from dreams
- Disruption of regular daily schedule

Examples of Tips for Managing Sundowners Syndrome in the Elderly

- While it is difficult to completely eliminate sundown syndrome behaviors, you can work to minimize or manage them. Managing behavior requires a caregiver's strict attention to details and monitoring a patient's activities throughout the day. Try these tips to help you manage these behaviors:

- Maintain a predictable daily schedule for waking up, meals, activities and bedtime. Routine helps reduce uncertainty.
- Plan daytime activities and adequate exposure to light to create strict day and nighttime separation and to encourage sleepiness at night.
- Limit daytime napping to increase sleepiness at night.
- Limit caffeine and sugar in the diet to early in the day or not at all.
- Use a night light to illuminate dark spaces to reduce anxiety at night when surroundings seem unfamiliar..

SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Senior Living

READ MORE ABOUT SUNDOWNERS SYNDROME AT: <https://www.seniorliving.org/health/sundown-syndrome/>