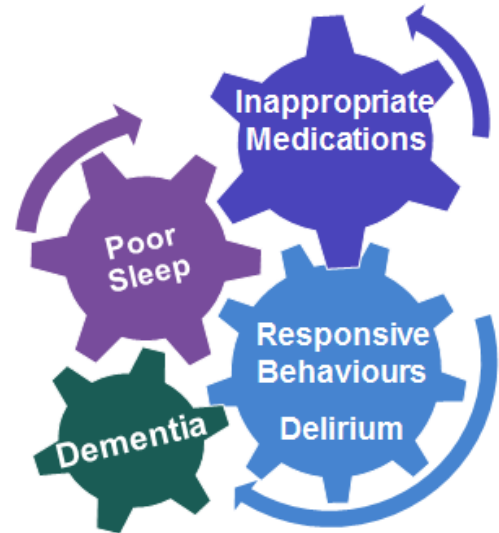


Elder Friendly Care (EFC) Project in Acute Care Support of Sleep

How do you feel when you haven't slept well? Irritable, depressed foggy, anxious? Imagine what it feels like to sleep poorly for weeks or months.

People with dementia often have trouble sleeping. Getting a good night sleep in a hospital can also be a challenge. Noise, light and staff routines interrupt sleep at night. In the day, there's too much sitting and napping; too little activity and light.

Poor sleep can result in foggy thinking and agitation, which can lead to use of antipsychotics and other medications.



“Older adults using hypnotics [sleeping pills] may experience decreased total sleep time, an increase in early morning awakening, an increase in daytime lethargy and report reduced sleep quality.” Koch

Evening antipsychotics and sleeping pills are not usually helpful. Research does not support long term use of sleeping pills in the elderly. Sleeping pills interfere with important stages of sleep and cause falls, daytime grogginess, and other side effects.

As part of our participation in the EFC Project, we will be looking at ways to improve the sleep of patients. Over the next few months we will:

- Assess individual patients to discover what interferes with their sleep
- Work with families, staff, prescribers and pharmacists to improve sleep
- Address unit routines, light and noise on all shifts
- Cautiously decrease use of evening antipsychotics and sleeping pills

Keep an eye on our Quality Improvement board for updates and information, and don't hesitate to offer ideas and suggestions.