



Understanding Sundowning

Sundowning is a common phenomenon in individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's disease, characterized by increased confusion, agitation, and other behavioral changes that occur in the late afternoon or evening hours. The exact cause of sundowning is not fully understood but it is believed to be related to:

- Changes in Circadian Rhythm
- Reduced exposure to sunlight during the day
- Increased fatigue and stress
- Confusion and disorientation due to dementia

Refer to this [3 minute video](#) for a full explanation.

For Caregivers, what are some strategies that we can use to help a patient experiencing sundowning?

Environment

- Ensure adequate lighting during the day and provide a quiet, comfortable environment in the evening.
- Avoid overstimulation with loud noises, bright lights, or too many people.
- Use calming music or nature sounds.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine with a warm bath, comfortable bed, and soothing activities.

Activity

- Engage in physical activity during the day, but avoid overexertion.
- Provide simple, enjoyable activities that promote relaxation and focus, such as reading, listening to music, or spending time with loved ones.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol in the afternoon and evening.

Medication

- In some cases, medications may be prescribed to help manage sundowning symptoms.
- Consult with a healthcare professional to determine if medication is appropriate.
- Melatonin is sold over the counter at CVS and commonly used for sundowning.

Additional Tips

- Establish a regular daily schedule and stick to it as much as possible.
- Provide clear and simple instructions.
- Use positive reinforcement and praise appropriate behaviors.
- Be patient and understanding, as sundowning can be frustrating for both the individual and their caregivers.

- Seek support from family, friends, or a caregiver support group.

30-Second Demonstrations (Click on Link)

[3 Signs To look For](#)
[What Sundowning Looks Like](#)
[Strategies for Prevention](#)

A great resource for help coping with sundowning is a YouTube Channel called [Dementia Success Path](#). Subscribe to this channel for more tips and strategies. We hope you found this information helpful as you care for clients with sundowning. Please let us know if we can assist you should any more questions arise and thank you for choosing Ann's Guardian Angels, Inc.

For additional resources on caregiving, please refer to our website,

🌐 [Home Care Resources | Anns Guardian Angels](#)

Ann's Guardian Angels is a proud member of Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts and more information on setting up the right environment for Dementia/Alzheimer's patients can be found on this video:

🌐 [Setting Up A Home For Dementia with Joan Wright, CMC, CPD \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

