

Winter Sleep Checklist for Seniors

A practical, doctor-informed checklist to help older adults sleep better during cold, dry winter months.

Bedroom Environment

- Set bedroom temperature between 65–68°F at night.
- Use a cool-mist humidifier to combat dry indoor air.
- Choose breathable bedding (cotton or bamboo) and layer light blankets.
- Keep the bedroom dark, quiet, and device-free.
- Use white noise if household or outdoor noise disrupts sleep.
- Slightly elevate the head of the bed if congestion is an issue.

Clothing & Bedding Safety

- Wear thermal pajamas or socks instead of overheating the room.
- Consider a lightweight knit cap if your head gets cold.
- Avoid heavy quilts that restrict movement.
- Use electric blankets cautiously and only with automatic shutoff.

Airway & Comfort Protection

- Use saline nasal spray before bed to reduce dryness.
- Drink warm fluids in the evening (water or herbal tea).
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine at night, which worsen dehydration.
- Place a bowl of water near heat sources if a humidifier isn't available.

Daily Habits That Support Sleep

- Get morning light exposure to support circadian rhythm.
- Stay physically active during the day, even indoors.
- Limit naps and avoid late-afternoon sleeping.
- Create a calming evening wind-down routine.

When to Talk to a Doctor

- Snoring or breathing problems worsen in winter.
- You wake up gasping, choking, or short of breath.
- Daytime fatigue, balance issues, or memory problems increase.
- Chronic conditions flare when sleep worsens.

Disclaimer: This checklist is for informational purposes only and does not replace medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider regarding sleep concerns or treatment options.