

Sundown Syndrome

Have you noticed a parent or friend that often has a change in their personality in the evening? There is a condition called "Sundown Syndrome" which occurs when light changes in the late afternoon or evening. This is not a disease but a condition that can cause many unpleasant conditions. When a person is "sundowning" they may be agitated, restless, irritable, disoriented, demanding and suspicious.

[WebMD – Better information. Better health.](#)

This time of the day is not the time for them to be sitting still, they should be busy. In their younger days at dusk they were going home from work, fixing dinner, running errands; they need to be busy. Ask them to fold clothes, move with the music, paint a picture or other simple task.

Fortunately, there are some steps that caregivers can take to help reduce the risk factors that may contribute to sundowning and help limit the severity of the behavior.

- Put lamps on a timer, so lights come on before dusk, avoiding shadows
- Music therapy-old record albums or cassettes assessable
- Reduce sugar and caffeine intake

Sundown Syndrome will often accompany a person with dementia, but not always. If you have a friend with these symptoms, call them at dusk and help them stay busy so they will not have "sundowning" symptoms that day.

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