

Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome

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In this disorder, bedtime and wake time are significantly earlier than average. If you try to stay up later, you have a hard time staying awake. If allowed to go to sleep early and wake up spontaneously, you can get a normal number of hours of sleep. If you can do this on a regular basis, you tend to feel fairly rested. The problem is that you wake up too early in the morning and have a hard time staying awake in the evening.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of *Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome* is based on a fairly consistent history of a significantly early bedtime and wake time. When allowed to sleep on this schedule there is improved sleep quality and quantity.

Management

If you can successfully live a lifestyle that allows you to sleep on your advanced schedule and get enough sleep to feel rested, then you do not necessarily have to change anything. However, if you are having trouble staying awake in the evening and waking up too early in the morning, then you will need to delay your biological clock.

Bright white light in the evening for 30 to 120 minutes starting about 2 hours before the preferred bedtime can be effective in delaying the biological clock. It is important to set an alarm for 7 to 8 hours later. Even if you cannot sleep, you do not want to expose your eyes to any light until the alarm to prevent the biological clock from advancing again. Ideally sunglasses or blue light blockers should be worn for a few hours after that if you are going outside after sunrise.

For more information about changing the biological clock, go to the section on *Light Therapy*.