

Common Sleep Problems

Sleep problems involve having a hard time falling asleep, staying asleep or staying awake. The most common sleep problems are listed below.

Insomnia

Insomnia includes any problem with falling asleep, staying asleep or waking up too early in the morning. Factors that may cause insomnia include:

- Illness
- Feeling sad
- Stress
- Caffeine
- Alcohol or drugs
- Certain medicines
- Heavy smoking
- Poor sleep habits such as:
 - ▶ Daytime napping
 - ▶ Sleeping in a place with a lot of noise or light
 - ▶ Going to bed early
 - ▶ Spending too much time in bed awake

Make changes to the factors that may be causing your insomnia if possible. Talk to your doctor if you have a hard time sleeping more than 3 nights a week for a month. Have a regular bedtime routine. Limit caffeine, alcohol and smoking.

Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is when breathing stops at times during sleep. The length of time that breathing stops can vary from a few seconds to over a minute. During this time, the body does not get enough oxygen. Sleep apnea can

occur many times each night. See your doctor if your family notices loud snoring or lack of breathing during sleep. Other signs you may notice include falling asleep during the day and not feeling rested when you wake up in the morning. Treatment sleep apnea involves keeping the airway open during sleep. This may include:

- More tests
- Weight loss
- Avoiding alcohol
- Using a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine to open the airway during sleep

Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is having a hard time staying awake during the day. A person with narcolepsy may suddenly fall asleep during an activity. Treatment involves taking medicine to help you stay awake during the daytime.

Night Terrors

Night terrors occur when a person wakes suddenly with screaming, confusion or panic. Night terrors are treated with medicines taken during the day. See your doctor if you have these signs.

Sleepwalking

Sleepwalking is any activity like walking that is done while a person is asleep. The person often does not remember the activity. It is not dangerous to wake a sleep walker, but injuries can occur during sleepwalking. Keep a sleepwalker safe from injury such as blocking the stairs with a gate and removing objects to prevent tripping. Talk to a doctor if there are safety concerns with sleepwalking or if it occurs often.

Restless Leg Syndrome

Restless leg syndrome is leg discomfort often felt at night. The discomfort may feel like a creeping sensation, which only gets better by moving the legs. Restless leg syndrome may cause insomnia and

daytime sleepiness. There is no known cause or cure for restless leg syndrome. Talk to your doctor about ways to manage the problem. You can also try reducing stress, taking warm baths, massage and stretching exercises to help your muscles relax. Medicine may be prescribed to help discomfort if sleep is greatly disturbed.

Talk to your doctor if you have signs of a sleep problem. Your doctor may talk to you about ways to manage your problem or order a sleep study. A sleep study is a 6 to 8 hour recording of your brain activity, heart rate, leg movements, oxygen levels and breathing while you sleep at night.