



Lack of sleep makes it hard to focus and to make decisions.

Sleep Disorders & Snoring

Not getting enough sleep can cause you to be sleepy during the day. It can make you less able to function. Snoring and sleep disorders can cause these problems, too. Information on common sleep disorders and snoring is given below and on the next 3 pages.

Insomnia

Signs & Symptoms

- Having trouble falling asleep. Waking up in the middle of the night. Waking up too early and not being able to get back to sleep.
- Feeling like you didn't get enough sleep.

Causes

- Too much caffeine. Drinking alcohol and/or smoking before bedtime.
- Too much noise when falling asleep.
- Emotional stress. Depression. Anxiety. The manic phase of bipolar disorder.
- **Fibromyalgia.** (See at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Over active thyroid gland.

- Any condition, illness, injury, or surgery that causes enough pain or discomfort to interrupt sleep. Heart or lung conditions that cause shortness of breath when lying down. Side effects of some medicines, such as over-the-counter diet pills or decongestants.
- Changes in sleep/wake schedules, such as with work shift changes and jet lag.
- In children, nightmares or bed-wetting.

Treatment

- Self-care and prevention tips. (See on next page.)
- Treating the problem.
- Prescribed short-acting sleeping pills.

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) and Periodic Limb Movements in Sleep (PLMS)

Signs & Symptoms

- Creeping, crawling, pulling and/or painful feelings in one or both legs.
- Jerking or bending leg movements that you can't control during sleep.

Causes

The cause is not known. These factors play a role:

- Family history of RLS.

- The last months of a pregnancy.
- Chronic diseases, such as kidney failure, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Treatment

- Self-care and prevention tips.
- Prescribed medicines to control symptoms.
- A type of electric nerve stimulation.



Sleep Disorders & Snoring, Continued

Sleep Apnea

Signs & Symptoms

- Loud snoring and snorting sounds while sleeping on the back.
- Repeated periods when breathing stops 10 or more seconds during sleep.
- Waking up many times during the night. Excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Exhaustion. Hard time concentrating. Acting very cranky. Depression or other mental changes.
- Early morning headaches.

Causes

- Too much muscle tissue is in the airway or the tissue relaxes and sags. These things narrow or block the airway. Persons who snore loudly and are overweight are more prone to these problems.

- A physical problem in the nose or upper airway.

Treatment

The goal is to keep the airway open during sleep. This is done with self-care measures and one of these treatments:

- A mouth guard dental device custom made by a dentist. This is worn during sleep. It pushes the lower jaw forward to open the air passage behind the tongue.
- A nasal **continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)** device. Pressure from an air blower forces air through the nasal passages using a mask worn over the nose during sleep.
- Surgery to correct the cause of the airway obstruction.

Snoring

Signs & Symptoms

- Loud sounds. Harsh breathing. Snorting sounds. These occur during sleep.

Causes

- Sleeping on the back. The tongue falls back toward the throat and partly closes the airway.
- Nasal congestion from allergies or colds. Smoking. Drinking alcohol. Taking sedatives. Overeating (especially before bedtime).
- Sleep apnea or chronic respiratory disease.

- An obstructed airway. This can be due to enlarged tonsils or being overweight.
- Changes in hormones, such as during menopause or the last month of pregnancy.

Treatment

Self-care treats most cases. Other options are:

- Wearing a dental device that holds the jaw in a forward position.
- Surgery, if needed, to correct the problem.
- Treatment for sleep apnea, if needed.



How Much Sleep is Needed?

- Adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Teens need at least 8½ to 9¼ hours of sleep each night.
- After 6 months of age, most children sleep between 9 and 12 hours at night. Up to age 5, children may also take daytime naps for a total of ½ to 2 hours a day.



Get more information from:

HealthyLearn®
www.HealthyLearn.com

National Center on Sleep Disorders Research (NCSDR)
301.435.0199
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncsdr

National Sleep Foundation
703.243.1697
www.sleepfoundation.org

Sleep Disorders & Snoring, Continued

Questions to Ask

Do **signs and symptoms of sleep apnea** listed on previous page occur?



NO

Are any of these conditions present?

- Trouble falling or staying asleep due to pain or discomfort from an illness or injury or the need to wake up often to use the bathroom.
- Disturbed sleep since taking medication. Or, side effects from taking prescribed sleeping pills. Examples are feeling dizzy or confused or hallucinating.
- Trouble sleeping after 3 weeks.



NO

Do any of these problems occur?

- Snoring keeps you or your sleep partner from getting enough, restful sleep.
- Snoring persists despite using self-care measures.
- You think you're getting enough sleep, but still feel sleepy during the day.



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

For Insomnia

- Avoid caffeine for 8 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid long naps during the day.
- Have no more than 1 alcoholic drink with or after dinner.
- Avoid using electronic devices, such as a laptop computer before falling asleep and in the middle of the night. The type of light that emits from these devices makes it hard to fall asleep.
- Avoid nicotine. Don't smoke. Stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Get regular exercise, but not within a few hours of going to bed.

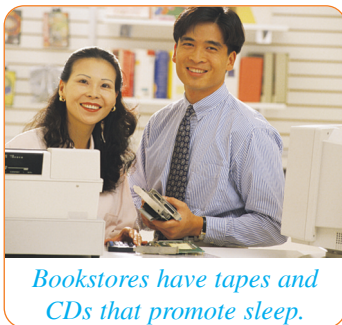


An hour or two before going to bed, dim the lights.



Sleep Disorders & Snoring, Continued

- Before bedtime, take a warm bath or read a book, etc. Avoid things that hold your attention, such as watching a suspense movie.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and comfortable.
- Follow a bedtime routine. Lock or check doors and windows, brush your teeth, etc.
- Count sheep! Picture a repeated image. Doing this may bore you to sleep.
- Listen to recordings that help promote sleep.
- Take over-the-counter sleep aids, (e.g., melatonin, Tylenol PM, etc.) as advised by your doctor. Don't take anyone else's sleeping pills.
- If you wake up and can't get back to sleep or can't fall asleep, after 30 minutes, get out of bed. Read a relaxing book or sit quietly in the dark. In about 20 minutes, go back to bed. Do this as many times as needed.



For Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS)

- Take medications as prescribed. Let your doctor know if the medicine no longer helps.
- For relief, move the legs. Walk, rub, or massage them or do knee bends.
- Limit or avoid caffeine.
- Take a warm bath before bedtime.

For Sleep Apnea

- Lose weight, if you are overweight.
- Don't drink alcohol. Don't use tobacco products.
- Don't take sleeping pills or sedatives.
- Use methods, such as those listed under **Self-Care / Prevention – For Snoring** (see below) to keep from sleeping on your back.

For Snoring

- Sleep on your side. Prop an extra pillow behind your back so you won't roll over. Sleep on a narrow sofa for a few nights to get used to staying on your side.
- Sew a large marble or tennis ball into a pocket on the back of your pajamas. This can help you stay on your side when you sleep.
- If you must sleep on your back, raise the head of the bed 6 inches on bricks or blocks. Or buy a wedge that is made to be placed between the mattress and box spring to elevate the head section.
- Lose weight, if you are overweight. Excess fatty tissue in the throat can cause snoring. Losing 10% of your body weight will help.
- Don't smoke. If you do, quit. Limit or don't have alcohol, sedatives, or a heavy meal within 3 hours of bedtime.
- To relieve nasal congestion, try a decongestant before you go to bed.
{**Note:** See information for **Decongestant** use at www.HealthyLearn.com.}
- Get rid of allergens in the bedroom. These include dust, down-filled (feathered) pillows, and down-filled bed linen.
- Try over-the-counter “nasal strips.” These keep the nostrils open and lift them up. This helps lessen congestion in nasal passages.