

# Sleep, but how?



“We know that how much you sleep and the quality of your sleep can have a tremendous impact on your overall health,” said Dr. David J. Earnest, professor at the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine, who studies circadian rhythms—the human body’s master clock.

“We’re starting to recognize that sleep deprivation and disorders are more prevalent than any other health disorder that affects Americans,” he said.

If you feel like there’s a deeper cause to your sleep woes, you may be like 1 in 10 Americans who suffer from insomnia or other sleep disorders, including these:

***Delayed Sleep Phase Disorder (DSPD)***—a tendency to go to bed later (around 2 or 4 in the morning) and to sleep until the early afternoon. This kind of disorder can interfere with a normal work or school schedule.

***Advanced Sleep Phase Disorder (ASPD)***—the tendency to go to bed earlier (6 or 8 in the evening) and to wake earlier than most people (around 3 or 5 in the morning). While this kind of disorder doesn’t typically interfere with a normal work or school schedule, it can pose a challenge for social activities or events that occur later in the evening.

***Non-24-Hour Sleep-Wake Syndrome***—a circadian rhythm that is 25 hours or longer, which leads to sleep and wake times becoming gradually later.

***Jet Lag***—one of the most common and usually occasional sleep disorders that occurs when your internal clock is out of synch with a new time zone. After traveling to a new time zone, you may find it difficult to fall and stay asleep during suitable times.

***Shift Work***—with constantly changing shifts, it can be difficult for workers to adjust to their new sleep schedules. Shift work has been linked with a higher risk of developing metabolic or cardiovascular diseases.

***Sleep Apnea***—breathing temporarily stops due to a blockage of the upper airways during sleep. Most people with sleep apnea do not know that they have it. Symptoms include daytime sleepiness, irritability, depression, and fatigue the next day, because their sleep lacks quality.

***Narcolepsy***—extreme sleepiness during the day, usually resulting in suddenly falling asleep. It’s caused by a dysfunction in the brain mechanism that controls sleeping and waking.

***Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS)***—itching, tingling, or burning in the lower legs, that makes it difficult to get comfortable and fall asleep.

***If you think you might have a sleep disorder, discuss your symptoms with your doctor or a sleep specialist.***