

SHOULD I TALK WITH MY PHYSICIAN?

Provided below is a brief description of common sleep disorders. Place a check by those symptoms you are experiencing. If you check multiple symptoms associated with a specific sleep disorder, you may want to discuss your sleep symptoms with your primary care physician as you may have an undiagnosed sleep disorder. Please Note: Only a physician can diagnose a medical condition. The below is provided as a guide regarding sleep disorder symptoms only and does not constitute medical advice or diagnosis.

Insomnia

Insomnia is a sleep disorder that is characterized by difficulty falling and/or staying asleep.

Symptoms:

- Trouble falling asleep
- Failure to sleep through the night
- Waking up earlier than usual
- Daytime sleepiness
- Reduced ability to concentrate
- Irritability

Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is a nervous system problem that causes extreme sleepiness and attacks of daytime sleep.

Symptoms

- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Sudden loss of muscle tone and control while awake (cataplexy)
- Sudden inability to move or speak while falling asleep or waking up (sleep paralysis)
- Vivid dreams while falling asleep or waking up (hallucinations)
- Difficulty staying asleep at night
- Exhaustion
- Depression

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)

RLS is a condition in which you have an uncontrollable urge to move your legs, usually due to discomfort. It typically happens in the evenings or at night while sitting or laying down.

Symptoms

- Sensation starts after no movement for an extended period (sensation described as crawling, creeping, pulling, throbbing, aching and itching)
- Relief by movement
- Symptoms worsen in the evening
- Nighttime leg twitching

Sleep Apnea

Sleep Apnea is characterized by breathing stopping and starting during sleep repeatedly through the night .

Symptoms

- Loud snoring
- Episodes of breathing pauses during sleep which is witnessed by someone
- Abrupt awakenings accompanied by shortness of breath

- Awakening with a dry mouth or sore throat
- Morning headache
- Difficulty staying asleep (direct symptom of Insomnia)
- Excessive daytime sleepiness (hypersomnia)
- Attention problems
- Irritability

Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorder

Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorders are a family of sleep disorders affecting the timing of sleep. People with Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorders are unable to go to sleep and awaken at the times commonly required for work or school as well as social needs.

Symptoms

- Sleeping during the day
- Missing work during the day due to sleep patterns
- Not getting sleep at a normal time
- Difficulty falling back asleep after waking up at night
- Waking up frequently during the night
- Need to take sleeping pills
- Not feeling refreshed after waking up

Hypersomnia

Hypersomnia is a condition in which you feel excessive sleepiness during the day. You may even experience this after a long period of sleep.

Symptoms

- Low energy
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Loss of appetite
- Slow thinking or slow speech
- Difficulty remembering
- Restlessness

Parasomnia

Parasomnias are a category of sleep disorders that involve abnormal movements, behaviors, emotions, perceptions, and dreams that occur while falling asleep or sleeping.

Symptoms

- Sudden partial awakening associated with confusion and disorientation
- Sleepwalking, or other arousal which includes but is not limited to walking, running, talking or eating
- Nightmares and Night Terrors
- Paralysis occurring near the beginning or end of sleep or even while awake
- Repetitive grinding of the teeth during sleep

If you have marked multiple symptoms related to the above described sleep disorders, you may want to discuss this with your primary care physician. Below are a few steps that you can take in preparation for discussion with your physician:

- Track a complete list of symptoms. It may also be helpful to keep a [sleep diary](#).
- Document any important information that could be affecting your sleep habits, such as stress triggers or major life changes
- List any medications, vitamins or supplements that you are currently taking
- Ask someone familiar with your symptoms (significant other, family member or friend) to accompany you to your appointment or provide a statement regarding your symptoms
- Create a list of questions for your physician, including:
 - Are you a sleep specialist? If not, should I see a sleep specialist?
 - How do I know I have (insert sleep disorder here)?
 - What is the cause of my symptoms?
 - Do I need to undergo any tests?
 - What treatments are available?
 - What treatment would work best for me with my specific disorder?
 - Do you have available reading material? Can you recommend some specific websites or resources?