A photograph of a bedroom at night. A desk lamp is lit on a nightstand, casting a warm glow. A bed with white and dark pillows is visible in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is calm and quiet.

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP DISORDERS

AND HOW THEY
AFFECT YOUR LIFE

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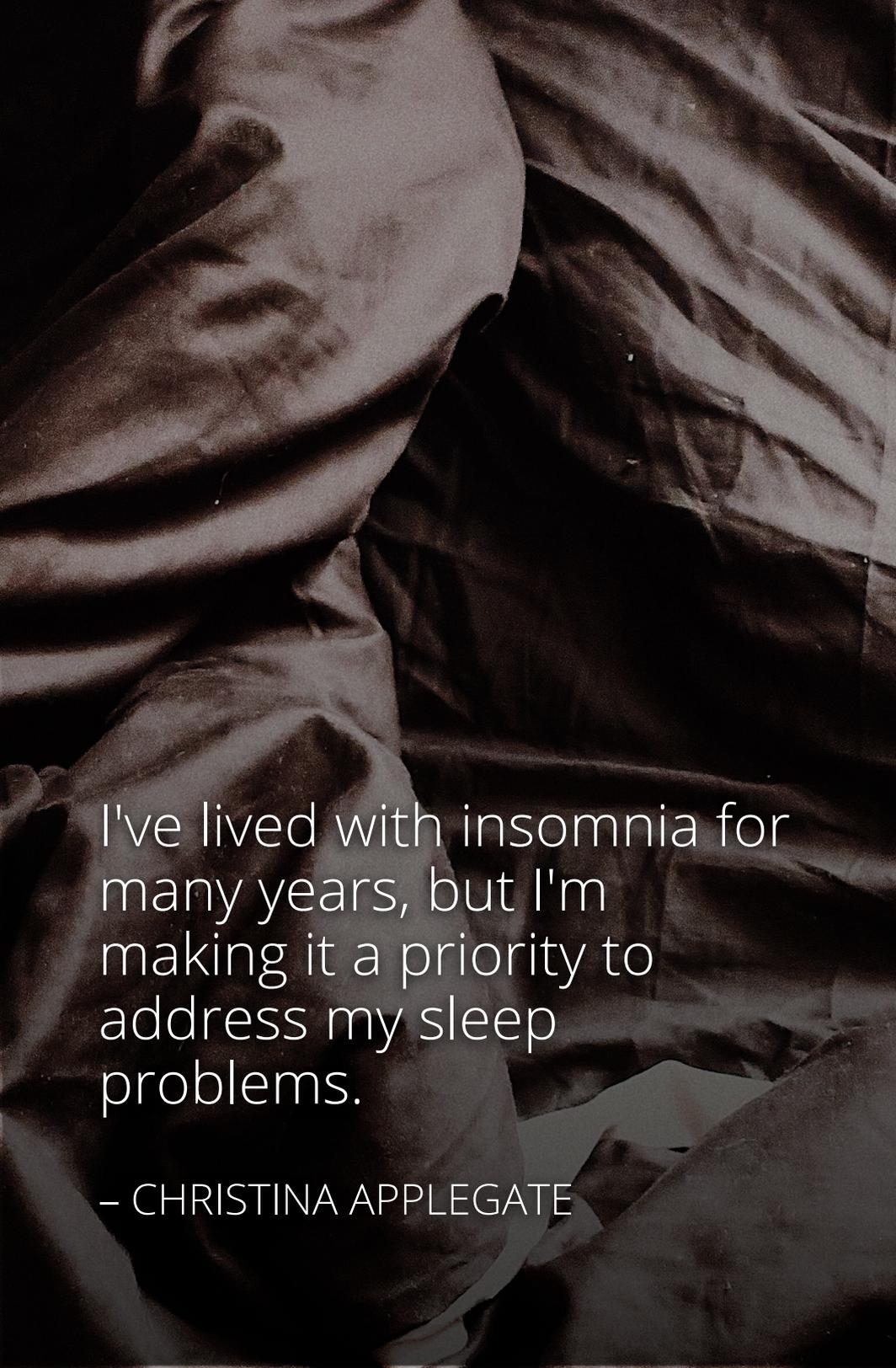
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I've lived with insomnia for many years, but I'm making it a priority to address my sleep problems.

– CHRISTINA APPLGATE

Introduction

The average amount of sleep recommended for an adult is 7-8 hours a night. Some adults may feel more rested with 9 hours of sleep, while others can function well with 6. According to the CDC, 28.5%-44% of adults are getting less than the recommended amount of sleep.

Interestingly, where you live might play a role in how much sleep you're getting. The highest percentage of people with short sleep duration live in the southeastern states, while those in the Great Plain states have the lowest percentage.

You may be wondering what causes this great disturbance in sleep across the US? For some, it may be due to external reasons. Some may have very busy schedules, they may have babies or kids who keep them up

at night, or they may simply enjoy staying up late in the evenings.

For others, good sleep is elusive even despite their best efforts. They may try very hard to get their 7-8 hours, but still fail to do so night after night. For these individuals, their sleep challenges may be because they're suffering from a sleep disorder.

Sleep disorders disrupt a person's sleep.

Someone with a sleep disorder may struggle to get good quality sleep, and they may also have a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep.

Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to a host of other issues, so it's important to diagnose a sleeping disorder and get the proper treatment to help.

Types of Sleep Disorders

No matter what type of sleep disorder you may have, the end result is pretty much the same: sleep deprivation.

However, identifying what *kind* of sleep deprivation you have is a big step in helping work out an effective solution.

There are quite a few sleep disorders, and each one can wreak havoc on a good night's sleep. Here are some of the most common sleep disorders.

1. Insomnia

Insomnia is the world's most common sleep disorder. Some people may experience insomnia in the short-term (acute) while others may experience it for months or years (chronic). For some,

symptoms of insomnia may disappear only to return again a few months later.

Common symptoms of insomnias include:

- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep at night
- Not feeling rested after sleep
- Exhaustion during the day
- Irritability, depression, or anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- Increased risk of mistakes or accidents
- Stress over not getting enough sleep

The two major types of insomnia are primary and secondary insomnia.

Those with primary insomnia experience sleep problems that aren't related to a health condition. Common causes of primary insomnia are:

- Major stress

- Outside irritants like noise, temperature, light, or mattress
- Changes in a sleep schedule
- Unhealthy habits or routines

Secondary insomnia is caused by a health condition or substance use. Common causes for secondary insomnia are:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Pain or discomfort caused by a medical condition like arthritis or migraines
- Caffeine, tobacco, drugs, or alcohol use
- Hyperthyroidism
- Additional sleep disorders
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Menopause
- Asthma

2. Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Obstructive sleep apnea is a physical ailment that causes poor quality sleep. **A person suffering from this disorder will repeatedly stop and start breathing during their sleep cycle.** They often snore loudly as well.

People with sleep apnea feel tired even after a full night's sleep, and they're usually completely unaware that they stop breathing in their sleep.

Common symptoms are:

- Fatigue during the day
- Snoring loudly
- A noticeable break from breathing usually repeatedly throughout the night
- Suddenly waking up often gasping or coughing
- Dry mouth and sore throat

- Difficulty concentrating during the day
- Depression or irritability
- High blood pressure
- Headaches in the morning
- Night sweats
- Low sex drive
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Restlessness during sleep

Common causes of obstructive sleep apnea are:

- Obesity
- Enlarged tonsils or adenoids
- Large overbite
- Allergies
- Hypothyroidism may be a contributing factor
- Deviated septum

3. Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder associated with overwhelming daytime drowsiness. This sleep disorder can be unexpected from an outside observer as someone with narcolepsy can be carrying on a conversation and fall asleep sitting up. In fact, **they can suddenly fall asleep during most normal activities.**

Common symptoms of narcolepsy are:

- Cataplexy - a sudden loss of muscle tone that makes a person lose total control of their muscles
- Excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS)
- Hallucinations
- Sleep paralysis
- Disrupted sleep
- Changes in rapid eye movement (REM) sleep

Common causes of narcolepsy include:

- Lack of the chemical hypocretin, an essential chemical meant to regulate wakefulness and REM
- May be linked to genetics
- The cause of narcolepsy is still under research without clear definitive answers.

4. Restless Leg Syndrome

If you haven't personally experienced Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS), you've probably seen the commercials for it. RLS is described as an uncontrollable urge to move your legs. It's a discomfort in the legs that makes you feel like you have to move them in order to have relief.

Unfortunately, even after shifting position, this discomfort comes back and it can make it very difficult to fall asleep.

The common symptoms of RLS are:

- Uncomfortable sensations such as throbbing, aching, itching, or crawling
- Temporary relief with movement
- Symptoms appear at night or at bedtime
- Nighttime leg twitching

Known causes of RLS include:

- Genetics. Sometimes RLS runs in families.
- Pregnancy. Some women experience RLS during pregnancy even if they don't normally have RLS.

Potential causes for RLS include:

- Iron deficiency
- Hypothyroidism
- Depression
- Kidney disease
- Rheumatoid arthritis

- Diabetes
- Some medications like antihistamines, antidepressants, or anti-nausea meds
- An additional sleep disorder like sleep apnea
- Caffeine, alcohol, or tobacco

5. Parasomnia

Parasomnia is a sleep disorder that causes abnormal behavior while sleeping. **People who have parasomnia might sleepwalk, talk in their sleep, or make strange movements.**

There are many different types of parasomnia, and while each one relates to unusual sleeping behavior, each is quite unique.

Some examples of parasomnia are:

1. **Nightmares.** Someone with parasomnia may have extremely vivid

dreams that cause anxiety or fear. The dreams may also cause them to wake up and have trouble falling back asleep.

2. **Night terrors.** A person with night terrors will suddenly wake up scared and confused and will often scream. **They may not be fully awake and are usually unable to communicate during the episode.**
3. **Sleepwalking.** Sleepwalkers get up and move about in their sleep, but generally have no recollection of it the next day. Most sleepwalkers walk around during non-REM sleep. It can sometimes be dangerous since they don't have control over what they're doing.
4. **Sleep talking,** also known as somniloquy, is when people mumble or even have full conversations in their

sleep. Like sleepwalking, they usually won't recall speaking in their sleep the next morning.

5. **Sleep-related groaning** or catathrenia happens when a person exhales slowly and deeply. **It may sound like a roaring or a loud humming.** While it's often confused with snoring, it's different and not caused by breathing issues.
6. **Bed-wetting** or nocturnal enuresis is involuntarily urinating while sleeping. It's most common in children under the age of 6, although it can happen with older children and rarely in adults. In some cases, it may point to an underlying condition such as a urinary tract infection.
7. **Sleep paralysis.** Someone with sleep paralysis will have episodes when falling asleep or waking up when

they're unable to move their body.

This may last seconds or even minutes.

8. **Teeth grinding** or sleep bruxism is the involuntary grinding or clenching of teeth in sleep.

Main causes for parasomnias include:

- Genetics. Parasomnia tends to run in families and may have a genetic factor.
- Other sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea or insomnia
- Substances such as alcohol
- Withdrawal from substances
- Medications like sedatives or antidepressants

6. Excessive Daytime Sleepiness

Excessive daytime sleepiness affects nearly 20% of the population making it one of the most common sleep-related complaints.

In most cases, excessive daytime sleepiness is a symptom of another sleeping disorder as opposed to a disorder itself.

People experiencing excessive daytime sleepiness might feel:

- Sluggish
- Irritable
- Unfocused
- Clumsy
- Difficulty waking up in the morning
- Loss of appetite
- Sleepiness during waking hours
- Anxiety

Common causes for excessive daytime sleepiness are:

1. **Sleep disorders** such as insomnia, narcolepsy, or obstructive sleep apnea.
2. **Depression** may cause a person to feel tired during the day even when they've had an appropriate amount of sleep.
3. **Poor sleep habits.** For some, excessive daytime sleepiness is a result of simply not getting enough sleep during the night due to lifestyle choices.
4. **Chronic pain.** People with chronic pain often struggle to get sufficient sleep at night which can lead to excessive daytime sleepiness.

7. Circadian Rhythm Sleep Disorders

A circadian rhythm is the waking and sleeping cycle that naturally occurs in your body. **It's when your body tells you you're tired and should go to sleep, and when it tells you it's time to wake up in the morning.**

Though you may not always stick to a consistent schedule, usually your circadian rhythm will have you getting sleepy at generally the same time each day -- at an appropriate time for your schedule.

For some, this rhythm is off, which can cause sleep issues.

There are five main types of circadian rhythm sleep disorders:

1. **Delayed sleep phase disorder.**
People with this disorder are often

called “night owls.” They can’t get sleepy until very late in the evening even when they make a strong attempt to do so.

- **Because they go to sleep so late, they often want to sleep late into the morning.** While this schedule is not a problem for some people, it can be difficult when working a normal 9-5 schedule or when getting kids ready for school in the morning.

2. **Advanced phase sleep disorder.**

People with this sleep disorder have the opposite issue. Instead of staying up late at night, they can’t stay awake in the early evening. Usually, around 6-8 pm, they’re ready for bed.

- This may not be a major challenge if they have no

evening responsibilities, but it can be difficult if they want to go out with friends, talk to a partner in the evening, or care for children.

3. **Non-24-Hour Sleep-Wake Disorder.**

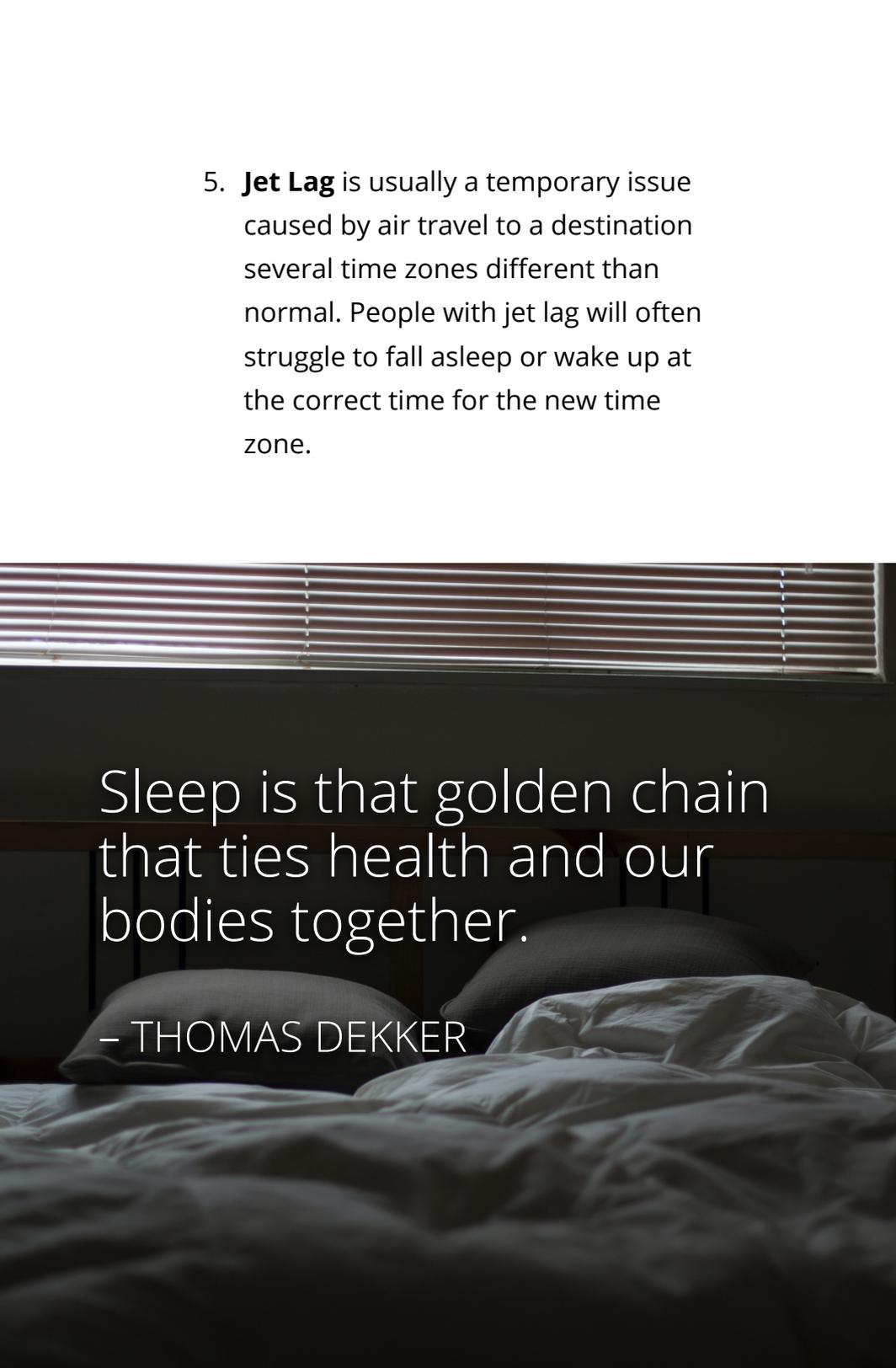
With this disorder, people have a circadian rhythm cycle that lasts longer than 24 hours. For example, they may go to bed later and later each night until they have their days and nights switched.

- This disorder is most common with people who are blind, but it can occur with non-blind people as well.

4. **Shift work.** Shift work can **greatly affect someone's circadian rhythm**

and make it difficult to get the appropriate amount of sleep.

5. **Jet Lag** is usually a temporary issue caused by air travel to a destination several time zones different than normal. People with jet lag will often struggle to fall asleep or wake up at the correct time for the new time zone.

A dark, moody photograph of a bedroom. In the foreground, a bed with white linens is visible. In the background, a window with horizontal blinds is partially open, letting in some light. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

Sleep is that golden chain
that ties health and our
bodies together.

– THOMAS DEKKER

Health Consequences of Insufficient Sleep

Getting an adequate amount of sleep at night is as important as eating well and exercising. It's an important part of a person's mental and physical well-being.

Chronic poor sleep can lead to a host of mental and physical challenges.

Sleep Deprivation Can Affect Your Immune System

Has your doctor ever told you to get extra rest when you're sick? That's because sleep is part of the body's way of healing. During rest, the body releases proteins called cytokines. These cytokines have a number of functions including helping with inflammation, infection, and sickness.

Some studies suggest that when you sleep, the body produces these cytokines even

when you're not hurt or sick to strengthen the immune system. Other research has shown that sleep can also help reduce the reaction to allergies and may help boost the effectiveness of vaccines.

The Sleep Foundation states:

Studies of vaccines for hepatitis and swine flu (H1N1) have found that when people don't sleep the night after receiving a vaccine, the body's immune response is weaker. In some cases, this reduces the vaccine's protection and may even require a second dose of the vaccine.

When someone has a sleep disorder or a lifestyle that doesn't give them enough sleep, there can be negative repercussions to the immune system.

Lack of Sleep Can Affect Your Cardiovascular System

People who suffer from chronic sleep deprivation are at a higher risk for developing cardiovascular issues.

When you don't get enough sleep, it triggers the sympathetic nervous system's flight, fight, or freeze response. **It produces excessive adrenaline that can cause your blood pressure to run higher and increase the risk of cardiovascular complications.**

People who don't get enough sleep at night also skip an essential NREM time that is healthy for the heart. During this time, the body's heart rate slows, and blood pressure drops. It gives the heart time to heal from the day's activities and recuperate for the next day.

The Sleep Foundation states:

As a result, chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to numerous heart problems including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart attack, obesity, diabetes, and stroke.

People who have obstructive sleep apnea are also at a higher risk for developing cardiovascular problems. Sleep apnea causes interrupted breathing which leads to poor sleep quality.

In addition to affecting sleep, the interruptions in breathing also limit the amount of blood circulating through the body which is another attack on the cardiovascular system.

Sleep Disorders and the Connection to Diabetes

There is some research that indicates that people getting poor or insufficient sleep are at a higher risk for developing diabetes.

In a study titled, *Sleep Duration and Diabetes Risk: Population Trends and Potential Mechanisms*, researchers concluded:

...insufficient sleep duration and/or sleep restriction in the laboratory, poor sleep quality, and sleep disorders such as insomnia and sleep apnea have all been associated with diabetes risk.

Not only does poor sleep increase the risk of diabetes, but diabetes can also lead to poor sleep quality.

According to the Sleep Foundation, 1 out of 2 people with type 2 diabetes report having

sleep issues. Unstable glucose levels can cause insomnia and excessive daytime sleepiness. It can also cause people to sleep too long at night and suffer from nightmares, night sweats, and irritability upon waking up.

In addition, when sleep is affected, it increases the hunger hormone called ghrelin and decreases the hormone leptin that tells the body it's full.

Often people who don't get enough sleep at night will try to compensate with food during the day. The foods they crave are usually high in sugar or fat so the body can create the energy that wasn't produced in sleep.

A Link Between Sleep Disorders and Depression

Insufficient sleep also has an effect on a person's mental well-being. There is evidence that sleep disorders cause an

increased risk of depression. In a way, it's a chicken and egg question. **Does depression cause a sleep disorder or do sleep disorders cause depression?**

Whether one starts the other, sleep deprivation and depression increase the symptoms in both. People who have depression often express having trouble sleeping, and people who have trouble sleeping are more likely to feel depressed.

In a study called *Sleep disorders as core symptoms of depression*, researchers write,

About three quarters of depressed patients have insomnia symptoms, and hypersomnia is present in about 40% of young depressed adults and 10% of older patients, with a preponderance in females. The symptoms cause huge distress, have a major impact on quality of life, and are a strong risk factor for suicide.

Diagnosing a Sleep Disorder

It's clear that sleep disorders can be disruptive to a person's health and well being. So what can someone do who suspects they have a sleeping disorder?

If you find yourself feeling exhausted, having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, it may be a good idea to talk to a sleep specialist.

What to Tell A Sleep Specialist

When you visit a sleep specialist, they're probably going to ask you some questions about your health history and your issues with sleep.

Some things they may ask for are:

1. **A detailed history of your sleep.** For many, a spouse or someone you live with can fill in details that you may be missing while you're asleep. They're usually familiar with your nighttime activities even when you're not.

- For instance, they're probably aware when you sleepwalk or if you're snoring loudly or taking breaks in breathing (such as from sleep apnea). These details will help you determine what kind of sleep disorder (if any) you may have.
- You can also tell them about any symptoms you may be experiencing such as insomnia, parasomnia, or excessive daytime sleepiness.

2. **History of medication.** Certain medications can cause disruptions in

sleep, so it's essential to share with the specialist any medication you are on or have recently taken.

3. **Start a sleep diary.** You can begin writing a sleep diary to keep a record of your sleep. A sleep diary might include:

- Time falling asleep and waking up
- How many hours slept
- Quality of sleep
- Record of what you ate the day before
- Stressors in your life
- Any medications taken
- Consumption of alcohol or caffeine
- Exercise from the day (especially before bed)

A Sleep Study and How it Can Help Diagnose a Sleep Disorder

A sleep specialist, or somnologist, will gather all the information you've provided about your sleep habits, lifestyle, comorbidities, and medicine. Once this is collected, they might order a sleep study to get a better idea of what's causing poor sleep.

A sleep study will help a sleep specialist determine exactly what's happening when you go to sleep.

The most common type of sleep study is a polysomnogram, but there are other tests that a specialist can use to help diagnose an issue like home sleep apnea testing (HST), and multiple sleep latency tests (MSLT).

What to Expect From an In-Clinic Polysomnogram Sleep Study

In order to conduct a sleep study, a technician will study a patient while they sleep. They'll often have a lab where a person can sleep comfortably while a technician observes their activity from another room. Most people would think the sleep center looks similar to a hotel room. It's dark and quiet.

Normal bedtime routines like reading before bed are welcome. It's also okay to wear your own nightclothes.

When it's time to go to sleep, small sensors are placed on the head and body with an adhesive. These sensors will collect data on body and brain activity that occur during sleep. This information is highly beneficial in diagnosing an issue because the unconscious body reveals things the patient may not know about themselves.

In addition to the sensors, the technician may also wrap plastic belts around the chest and abdomen to measure breathing.

Things that may be observed during a polysomnogram sleep study are:

- Blood oxygen levels
- Brain waves
- Body positioning
- Heart rate
- Breathing patterns and breathing rate
- Limb movement
- Eye movement
- Sleep stages
- Snoring or other noises made while sleeping
- Unusual behaviors

During the study, if the technician suspects you may be suffering from obstructive sleep apnea, they may try a positive airway pressure (PAP) machine. If the technician believes you may need a PAP machine

before the study begins, they may have you test it out beforehand so it's not surprising to be asked to use it in the middle of the night.

When it's morning and the visit is over, all the equipment will be removed and you're free to go home. You'll then be able to set up an appointment with the doctor who recommended the test to get your results.

What is a Home Sleep Apnea Test?

HST is a type of polysomnography, but instead of in a lab it's self-administered. This is a good option for those who likely have sleep apnea, but don't have a schedule or lifestyle that allows them to be tested in a sleep lab. It can also be used for someone who has a health issue that would preclude them from leaving their home for testing.

A home sleep apnea test is a breathing machine that monitors breathing, oxygen levels, and lapses in breathing.

HST is not as thorough as an in-clinic polysomnography test, but it can reveal breathing issues that occur during the night.

What is a Multiple Sleep Latency Test?

MSLT, sometimes called the daytime nap study, records information gathered from a patient taking naps during an entire day. The study is meant to discover how long you will stay asleep in a quiet environment.

This test is primarily for those who are tired during the day and may reveal that someone has narcolepsy or idiopathic hypersomnia (excessive sleepiness).

For this test, a technician will apply sensors on the face, head, and chin and ask you to take a nap. It's common to schedule five naps during the test with two-hour breaks in between.

If you're unable to fall asleep during an allotted nap period, you will go directly to your two-hour break. You will have to stay awake until the next nap time, and you're allowed to stay busy in order to stay awake.

In this study, the technician will be monitoring:

- Heart activity
- Brain activity
- Breathing
- Oxygen levels
- Eye movement
- Latency (how long it takes to fall asleep)
- REM sleep
- NREM sleep

It's particularly important to discover if you experience REM sleep during the sleep testing. Those who have narcolepsy are more likely to experience two or more naps with REM sleep, while those with idiopathic hypersomnia may have one or fewer naps with REM sleep.



Sleep is that golden chain
that ties health and our
bodies together.

– THOMAS DEKKER

Treatment For Sleep Disorders

Treatments for sleep disorders are highly dependent on the type of sleep disorder one may have. Those with sleep apnea won't benefit from the same treatment as those with insomnia.

In this section, we will go over the available treatments for some of the most common sleep disorders.

Treatment for Insomnia

Insomnia treatment is meant to improve sleep quality and also address daytime impairments that might affect sleep during the night. In order to do this, **a treatment plan might include cognitive behavioral therapy as well as medication.**

Cognitive-behavioral therapy for insomnia might include:

1. **Relaxation techniques.** Insomnia can be the result of stress, and it can cause stress, so relaxation techniques are a good way to combat it. This solution might include breathing exercises, prayer, stretching exercises, and guided imagery.
2. **Stimulus control.** Another way to combat insomnia is to set a bedtime routine. A routine might include going to bed at the same time every night, taking a warm bath, or reading a book.
 - It also means using a bed for sleep and limiting wakeful periods in the bed. If you're not feeling sleepy, leave the bed and return only when you're sleepy again.

There are multiple medications available for insomnia like:

- Benzodiazepine sedatives*
- Non-benzodiazepine sedatives*
- Antidepressants
- Anti-anxiety medication

*Sleeping pills can be addictive and likely will only be prescribed for a short period of time.

Treatment for Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Treatment for obstructive sleep apnea is often a mix of using a PAP machine and lifestyle changes. If other treatments are unsuccessful, surgery may be used as a last resort.

Lifestyle activities that may help with obstructive sleep apnea are:

- Regular exercise
- Losing weight
- Reducing alcohol intake
- Quitting smoking
- Sleeping in a different position (not on the back)
- Change in medication (sedatives may make sleep apnea worse, for example)

What is a PAP machine?

PAP, or positive airway pressure machines, deliver air pressure through the mouth or nose. This machine helps reduce the number of respiratory events (pauses in breathing) that occur during sleep. A CPAP is the most common form for a PAP machine, but BiPAP and APAP are also used regularly.

Treatment for Narcolepsy

There is no known cure for narcolepsy, but symptoms can be managed with medicine and lifestyle changes.

Helpful lifestyle changes might include:

- Sticking to a sleep schedule
- Taking scheduled naps
- Avoiding alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine
- Getting regular exercise
- Avoiding exercise before bedtime

Some of the available medicines for narcolepsy are:

- Stimulants
- Modafinil
- Sodium oxybate
- Antidepressants
- Methylphenidate Hcl

Treatment for Restless Leg Syndrome

The first step to treating RLS is to rule out other possible underlying issues.

For instance, alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco may increase the chances of having RLS symptoms. Medications such as benadryl, anti nausea drugs, or lithium may also cause or worsen symptoms. If these things cause RLS, they can be modified or removed from a person's life.

Another option is taking supplements to help treat RLS. For some, RLS can be linked to an iron deficiency. In that case, a doctor may prescribe an iron supplement if your blood work indicates low iron. Vitamin D may also be prescribed for similar reasons.

Other ways to help the symptoms of RLS include:

- Exercise
- Massages
- Stretching
- Healthy sleep habits (a bedtime schedule/routine)
- Pneumatic compression
- Vibration pad (relaxis)

Medication is sometimes prescribed to offer relief. Some medications that may be prescribed are:

- Dopaminergic drugs
- Gabapentin
- Benzodiazepines
- Opioids*

*Opioids are addictive and use of this medication must be closely watched over by a doctor.

Treatment for Parasomnia

Parasomnia can be treated with both cognitive behavioral therapy and medication.

Therapies might include:

- Psychotherapy
- Relaxation therapy
- Hypnosis

Medications for Parasomnia might include:

- Antidepressants
- Melatonin
- Benzodiazepines

Effective sleep habits can also help people with parasomnia, as well as making their home a safe environment. Since some people with parasomnia get out of bed and move around the house, it may be a good idea to lock windows or doors and keep dangerous objects out of the way.

Treatment for Circadian Rhythm Disorders

Circadian rhythm disorders are sometimes caused by external factors like changing work shifts or jet lag. In those cases, the treatment may be getting over jet lag or working towards making a sleep environment conducive to sleep even with changing shifts.

Other treatments may involve:

1. **Bright light therapy.** This is an exposure to bright light during times when you should be awake and can help reset the circadian rhythm.
2. **Chronotherapy.** This behavioral treatment has the person gradually shifting their sleeping/waking time. If you struggle to go to bed at a certain time, you may move your bedtime up one hour at a time until you are more

likely to fall asleep at the appropriate time.

- It would also mean waking up at a certain time the next morning to match the bedtime the night before.

3. **Medications** like stimulants, antidepressants, or sodium oxybate may be prescribed by a doctor.

Tips for Getting a Better Night's Rest

Even if you aren't diagnosed with a sleep disorder, there are some things you can do to get some more z's at night.

Try these tips for a better night's sleep:

1. **Turn off screens.** The National Sleep Foundation says that technology/ screens can affect our sleep in three very big ways. It suppresses melatonin, keeps your brain active, and a mobile device can light up or ding after you've fallen asleep waking you up again.
 - To avoid this, keep screens out of your bedroom. Turn off the TV, put your phone in another room, and shut down the

tablets. Instead, try reading a book before bed.

Studies show that reading is relaxing and can help you fall asleep.

2. **Create a sleep routine.** For a better sleep routine, try to pick the same time to go to bed and to rise each day. Your body will adjust to this schedule and you may find that, eventually, you won't even need an alarm clock to wake up.
 - Find a relaxing bedtime routine away from bright lights that can help you fall asleep. A routine such as a warm bath before bed, reading a book, or breathing exercises are beneficial for helping you fall asleep at night.

- **Your body will start to recognize these nighttime routines as a trigger that it's time to go to sleep.**
3. **Get exercise, but not right before bed.** Physical exercise -- especially intense exercise -- can help you fall asleep and stay asleep at night.

However, exercising right before bed can keep you awake because your body releases hormones that tell you it's time to be active. Try to schedule exercise during daylight hours.

4. **Make your bedroom a sleeping place.** Another important tip is to keep your bedroom a place of rest.

If you're working or exercising in your room, your mind and body will not think of it as a place of rest. Instead, it will treat it like a place of activity. So

keep the work out and keep your bedroom a haven of rest.

5. **Cut back on caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.** These substances are known to affect sleep quality.

Caffeine may make it difficult to fall asleep at night, and alcohol may help you fall asleep, but is associated with lower sleep quality. Nicotine is also linked to poor sleep.

Final Words on Sleep Disorders

A sleeping disorder can greatly affect a person's life, health, and wellbeing.

Thankfully, there are specialists that can help diagnose and treat many different sleeping disorders.

Relief is possible, but it may take time and trial and error to find the root cause and manage it.

If you or someone you love is struggling to get enough sleep at night, try using a bedtime routine and keep on a strict sleep schedule. If challenges persist, keep a sleep diary and reach out to a sleep specialist.

They can help you diagnose the issue and offer treatment that could drastically change your life.

Resources

- <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-disorders>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxPf-DNFtIE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OvIFN6Gr9c>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5SI8LyI7k8>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/sleep-disorders/what-are-sleep-disorders>
- https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/data_statistics.html
- <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/11429-common-sleep-disorders>
- <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/insomnia/what-causes-insomnia>
- <https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=98205>
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