

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!



**SECRETS OF PEACEFUL SLEEP
UNRAVELED!**



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Chapter 1: What Causes Insomnia and Who Suffers From It?

It is commonplace for several people to suffer at least an occasional night of almost non-existent sleep. The causes of insomnia differ from person to person. What made a student insomniac varies from what caused a shift worker or a traveler or an employee to acquire such sleeping disorder.

Insomnia, which is the inability to sleep satisfactorily or to have any sleep at all, is one of the most common sleep disorders. It is characterized by restlessness, sleep interruptions, decreased sleeping time than the usual, or sometimes complete wakefulness.

Aside from the annoyance that insomnia can cause to its sufferers, this sleep disorder causes those afflicted to lose enthusiasm and energy, acquire memory and concentration problems, feel lethargic, frustrated, and of course sleepy. Worse cases that may be induced by insomnia is one's being prone to accidents, reduced work productivity and the aggravation of psychological and medical conditions.

So what exactly are the culprits that make insomnia one menacing sleeping problem?

1. Emotional Distress

More particularly when it is from internalized anxiety or anger, emotional problems can easily trigger this sleep disorder.

2. Substance Abuse

Drinking too much coffee, colas or other "energy-upper drinks" is known to cause insomnia. Caffeine from these drinks is the main reason. Chain smokers can also be easy victims of insomnia because of the nicotine that cigarettes contain. Herbal remedies, alcohol and other medications can also make one prone to becoming an insomniac. Some may think that alcohol, when consumed, can make one feel drowsy. But little did they know that in the long run, when the alcohol gets metabolized, sudden wakefulness will follow.

3. Biological Clock Disturbance.

Also known as circadian rhythm, one's body clock, when altered, can damage the amount of sleep one can peacefully enjoy. This body clock disturbance can be caused by an irregular slumber schedule because of too much siesta or partying too late at night. It can also be jetlag or body clock disturbance due to traveling by plane to some place where there is a different time zone. Other causes may be the graveyard schedules of workers and cramming review season for students induced by exams.

4. Environmental Factors

Extreme temperatures can disrupt one's sleeping patterns. Noise and bright lights can have the same effect too. Homesickness or when one is forced to sleep in an unfamiliar place is also one reason behind getting into the habit of not having enough sleep.

5. Health Problems

Health disorders such as diabetes, heart failure, hyperthyroidism, ulcers, and Parkinson's disease can also induce insomnia. Asthma may also be one health problem that makes one prone to insomnia because of an asthmatic's shortness of breath. Frequent urination, heartburn, and chronic pain from leg cramps, tooth ache and arthritis can also cause insomnia.

Psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia and depression are also possible culprits for insomnia. Snoring with prolonged pauses in breathing while at sleep, also known as sleep apnea can also cause insomnia. Periodic arm and leg movements during sleep causing the muscles to twitch excessively is one underlying cause of this sleep disorder. Another cause is narcolepsy or one's lack of control on whether to stay awake or to fall asleep, is another cause of this sleep disorder.

6. Pre-bedtime Activities

Engaging to vigorous activities such as exercise just right before bedtime can deprive one of a good night's sleep. Consuming large meals when one is just about to sleep can also make one

experience this sleeping disorder. This is because when metabolism is at its most active thus the body prompts one to stay awake.

Who are Prone to Insomnia?

Reports have it that 90% of people can acquire transient insomnia at some point in their lives. While an estimate of 30% suffers from its chronic form.

a. Women are said to be more at risk in acquiring insomnia because of the following reasons:

- Pre-menstrual syndrome with symptoms of irritability, depression and anxiety, and bloating due to menstruation disturbs a woman's sleeping pattern.
- Menopause can also change a woman's sleeping pattern.
- Pregnancy makes sleeplessness one common thing to happen.

b. Elderly people are also prone to getting insomnia because ageing alters one's sleeping patterns.

c. Depressed people have lighter slumbers compared to those who don't feel this psychological condition.

d. Students or younger ones who are conscious with their grades (because of cramming) can easily become insomniacs too.

With that vast information on what causes insomnia and who are at risk with this sleeping disorder, one can easily ward off this annoying condition.

Chapter 2: The Types of Insomnia and Its Impact on One's Health

Enough sleep and rest is important to every living creature since it aids the body in replenishing the energy consumed during the day.

Insomnia, by itself, is not a disease. It may be a symptom of a physical and emotional imbalance or just manifestation of fatigue caused by lack of sleep.

This condition is manifested by any of the following: a) light, interrupted sleep that one is still tired upon waking up, b) not being able to sleep, even if fatigued, c) lack of sleeping hours.

Types of Insomnia

Although this condition is usually temporary, insomnia may be classified based on the length of time it has affected the patient.

*** Transient insomnia**

This condition remains only for a few days. Transient insomnia is commonly caused by stress or as a direct response to change. It is sometimes called adjustment sleep disorder.

The disorder may develop after a traumatic event or even during minor changes such as traveling or weather changes.

Caffeine and nicotine are also observed to affect sleeping patterns. Caffeine, which is present in coffee, and nicotine, present in cigarettes, can cause transient insomnia.

In most cases, treatment for transient insomnia is not necessary. It usually resolves after a few days once the person was able to adjust to the new situations or surroundings.

*** Short-term insomnia**

Short-term insomnia lasts for three weeks or less. Short-term insomnia and transient insomnia are almost similar in their causes.

Female hormonal changes can affect sleep patterns. One of the female hormones, progesterone, promotes sleep. During menstruation, when its levels are low, women may experience insomnia. On the other hand, during ovulation, the increase in progesterone levels increases sleepiness.

Fluctuations in the level of progesterone during pregnancy and menopause cause altered sleeping patterns leading to transient insomnia. Although women after 50 also experience chronic insomnia, this is usually caused by psychological or emotional factors.

Changes in working conditions, such as shifting schedules, also cause short-term insomnia. Also, people who tend to overwork get less sleep than the average. In one study, insomnia was also observed in people doing much computer work.

Light can also affect one's sleep. Too much light at night can disrupt sleep or even prevent sleepiness. Likewise, less light during the day, as in disabled or elderly patients who rarely go out can also cause short-term insomnia. This is because the levels of melatonin responding to darkness.

Melatonin is a hormone secreted by the pineal gland, a pea-sized gland at the center of the brain, that help regulate the cycles of sleeping and waking up.

* **Chronic insomnia** - when a person couldn't sleep, has interrupted sleep, or is still tired after sleeping; and the condition recurs for more than two nights every week for more than one month. Also, it is characterized when the patient is fatigued and believes that his daily activities are affected by this sleeping condition.

Based on the causes, chronic insomnia may be further characterized into primary or secondary:

* **Primary chronic insomnia** - when the insomnia is not caused by any physical or mental imbalance.

* **Secondary chronic insomnia** - may be caused by physical and mental conditions, such as depression, or emotional and psychiatric disorders.

In one study, in industrialized nations, chronic insomnia affects about ten percent of adults.

Insomnia can affect a patient during daytime when patient may experience sleepiness in the mornings or in the afternoon. Some, despite their sleepiness report failure to nap. Even worse, another group reported excessive energy during the day. These people are more anxious and even more irritable.

Due to failure to get enough rest, these people have reduced concentration. If someone has preexisting medical condition, such as and orthopedic pain or arthritis, this may be worsened by insomnia.

When one suspects that he or she has insomnia, consulting a doctor would be the best advised. One of these therapies may also be tried.

*** Minimizing consumption of caffeine containing beverages.** This includes coffee, colas and chocolate. It is advised to restrict consumption after 3pm. For most people, these substances are eliminated from the body in a few hours. But some people have slow biologic elimination process, which caffeine can stay in the body longer than the average.

*** People can also limit stay in bed during the sleeping hours.** This is effective to increase the tendency to sleep when in bed.

When none of these procedures work, one should consult a specialist for other therapies or if a medication is needed.

Chapter 3: The Interrelationship of Depression and Insomnia

Insomnia is a sleeping disorder characterized by any of the following: a) light, interrupted sleep that one is still tired upon waking up, b) not being able to sleep, even if fatigued, c) lack of sleeping hours.

Insomnia can be classified into three types based on the length of time it affects an individual.

Transient insomnia lasts only a few days and is usually due to changes in living or working conditions, which may be minor or traumatic.

Short-term insomnia, or acute transient insomnia, lasts for less than three weeks and has similar causes as transient insomnia.

Chronic insomnia, on the other hand, is more complex. This condition is characterized by one of the following: a) light, interrupted sleep that one is still tired upon waking up, b) not being able to sleep, even if fatigued, c) lack of sleeping hours.

Based on the causes, chronic insomnia may be considered as primary or secondary:

* **Primary chronic insomnia** - when the insomnia is not caused by any physical or mental imbalance.

* **Secondary chronic insomnia** - may be caused by physical and mental conditions, such as depression, or emotional and psychiatric disorders.

Since insomnia is just a symptom of an underlying disease or an imbalance, evaluating the cause of insomnia is very important before prescribing any medication.

Depression is the most common cause of chronic insomnia, especially in the elderly.

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A study shows that depressed elderly patients, if they suffer from insomnia, have a tendency to be depressed for over a year.

Another study shows that even without a history of depression, if an elderly patient suffers from insomnia, they have a high risk of being depressed. This is usually observed in women.

It has been proven that insomnia can affect ones' lifestyle negatively. Once this happens, the person starts to worry. Worrying, then causes depression.

Depression is an emotional condition characterized by sadness or misery. Although many have experienced this at one time, clinical depression is a mood disorder characterized by feelings of sadness, anger or frustration affect daily life for an extended period of time.

Another interesting relationship between depression and disrupted sleep is that some medications used for depression can cause insomnia. This is because these medications are used to make the patient more energetic, that at times, these make the patient anxious.

The new anti-depressants that have stimulant effects include Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft and other serotonin-reuptake inhibitors. Serotonin-reuptake inhibitors are substances that prevent the reabsorption of substances in the kidney. During the biological elimination process of substances taking place in the kidney, some substances are reabsorbed in the kidneys, thus, prolonging the effect of such substances.

With the presence of serotonin-reuptake inhibitors, serotonin is not reabsorbed and is continued to be eliminated from the body.

Serotonin is an important monoamine neurotransmitter that plays a large role in depression, anxiety and bipolar disorders. Some serotonin is converted by the pineal gland, the pea-sized gland at the center of the brain, into melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone that helps regulate the sleeping and waking cycles.

In addition to the prescribed medications to treat insomnia, a patient may also practice the following procedures to combat insomnia.

*** Control exposure to caffeine, alcohol and nicotine.**

These three substances are known to disrupt one's normal sleeping patterns.

*** Maintain regular sleeping time and waking time.**

This would help in maintaining the circadian rhythm thus minimizing the effects of fatigue caused by insomnia.

*** Regular exercise is good for the body but this shouldn't be done late in the afternoon or early in the evening.**

This is because exercise tends to start-up the body. If the body has gained more energy by the end of the day, this can prevent one from being able to sleep at night.

*** Go to bed only when about to sleep. Reading or watching TV in bed is discouraged or to be avoided.**

When the mind is conditioned that the bed is for sleeping, once one goes to bed, he or she can readily get some sleep.

*** Eat meals regularly.**

Meal intake affects biological activities due to increased blood flow to the stomach.

These pointers may be helpful in managing conditions associated with insomnia. Still, some situations require sleep-promoting medications prescribed by a medical specialist.

Chapter 4: What Symptoms Indicate A Serious Sleeping Disorder?

The experience of illness precipitates many stressful feelings and reactions like anxiety, anger, denial, shame, guilt, and uncertainty. The diagnostic tests, the medical treatment, the prognosis, the body changes, the reactions of family and friends, the experience of hospitalization, and the projected changes in life style—all take part in a person's adaptation to the new situation.

No wonder why there are certain conditions that are not treated immediately because most people who experience them are ashamed of admitting them or are not the least aware that they have them.

Take for example the sleeping disorders. A lot of people are not aware that such conditions exist. They just thought that simple matters that occur during their sleep are just the effects of other factors such as physical stress, fatigue, etc.

While these factors may contribute to the conditions of sleeping disorders, there are still other reasons that trigger these alarming conditions. What people don't know is that there are symptoms that may seem too ordinary to get worried but are, in reality, already signs of serious conditions or a greater risk in sleeping disorder.

According to some scientific reports and findings, more or less 33% of the entire population experience sleeping disorders. One of the most common sleeping disorders is Insomnia and sleep apnea ranking second on the list.

Usually, there are signs or symptoms of sleeping disorders that are already manifested or prevalent but are still neglected due to the fact that an individual lacks information about the condition or is not the least aware of what these symptoms mean.

That is why it is important for an individual to know these symptoms so as to know what necessary measures and actions should be taken immediately.

Here's the list:

1. Restless sleep at night.

There are people who cannot sleep restfully at night. These people have the tendency to toss and turn while they are trying to get some stable sleeping pattern.

Restless sleeping goes to show that the body is responding to a certain stimulus that triggers some activities. These may mean stuffed nose that leads to difficulty in breathing.

Hence, restless sleep is a good indicator that a person is experiencing sleeping disorder.

First, if the person is having difficulty in breathing even while sleeping would definitely lead to snoring or sleep apnea. These are two of the known sleeping disorders which when taken for granted may cause serious health problems or even death.

2. Sleeping during daytime or generally falls asleep most of the time.

People who are suffering from these kinds of symptoms are known to have sleeping disorders. This goes to show that the person is having a difficulty in staying awake.

These conditions are vital indicators of a certain sleeping disorder known as narcolepsy.

Narcolepsy has no known cause. However, it is usually characterized by excessive sleeping during daytime, in spite of the fact that the person had enough sleep during the night.

Studies show that those who usually fall asleep during the day, without any justifiable reason is said to be suffering from narcolepsy.

What's worse is that the attack usually occurs without notice or tell-tale signs. There are, in fact, some cases wherein people just doze off unexpectedly, even if they are doing something, say, watching the television or even walking.

3. Snoring while sleeping.

There are instances wherein people snore while sleeping. Because it is so common to almost anybody who sleeps, most people tend to think that snoring is just a part of sleeping and is a normal behavior. They even associate snoring with too much fatigue and stress, that is why, they consider it too common to get worried.

The only thing people get worried is when the snoring is already causing too much trouble with the couple or to those who are around them.

What people don't know is that snoring may be the primary indicator of a person who has more serious sleeping disorder aside from snoring itself.

Excessive snoring may lead to other serious sleeping disorder such as sleep apnea. This is because snoring manifests difficulty in breathing. That is why the vibration that happens inside the throat area is being induced whenever something is blocking the area.

Sleep apnea is a life-threatening sleeping disorder that manifests any interruptions or pauses in between breaths. It is so alarming because a person who is sleeping and suffering from sleep apnea usually stops breathing for several seconds usually up to a minute long and resumes breathing thereafter.

Indeed, these symptoms may seem too common for people to understand that they are the main factors that indicate the sleeping disorder.

But now that these items are known, the best thing to do is to assess them if they experience these problems. As soon as they are able to identify if they have these problems, it is best to have their conditions diagnosed by a doctor immediately so as to obtain necessary measures.

Sleeping Disorders #1 - Night Eating Syndrome

Eating while sleeping? It's probably a disorder

Has this happened to you?

You woke up one morning, and you found that there were wrappers of candy bar all over your kitchen. Incidentally, your stomach aches and you see that you had chocolate smudges all over your hands and face. Your parents or your husband tells you that you are up all night long eating, but surprisingly, you don't recall that you did so. Your parents or your husband seemed serious telling you that you actually ate all those chocolates. Is there an inside joke?

Probably not. In fact, the symptoms show that you probably have a night eating syndrome.

Night eating syndrome, also known as sleep-related eating, is considered by medical doctors as a parasomnia. It is not a frequent sleepwalking type. People suffering from this disorder have experiences of recurrent eating episodes while asleep, without actually being aware that they are actually doing it. This nocturnal eating syndrome might happen most of the time that it would show significant gain in your weight. Although this disorder can affect people in all ages and sexes, the sleep-related eating affects young women more than men.

What is night eating disorder?

Also known as nocturnal sleep-related eating disorder or NS-RED, night eating disorder is not an eating problem strictly speaking. It is known as a sleep disorder type that enables people to eat while seemingly asleep. While sleeping, they could eat while in bed, or in some cases, roaming around the house or staying at the kitchen.

The people suffering from this disorder are not conscious during NS-RED episodes. That is why night eating disorder is always related to sleep-walking. Being asleep, they do not know that

they eat and cannot recall any incident of eating the night before. If at all, they can only remember in fragments. The NS-RED episode more or less occurs somewhere in a state between sleep and wakefulness.

When people suffering from night eating disorder learn that they have such a problem, they feel ashamed and embarrassed. Some, even with evidence presented by his or her family members, deny that they did that. They cannot believe that they could do such a thing and cannot admit to themselves that they could not control themselves.

The food consumed during the disorder periods are most likely to be high-sugar, high-fat food that people usually avoid when they're awake. In some cases, there are those who eat bizarre food combinations, such as raw bacon partnered with mayonnaise, or hotdogs being dipped in a peanut butter. Some even eat non-food items such as soap in the same way they slice cheese.

How can you get NS-RED?

According to recent statistics, about three to nine people or about one to three percent of the total population are most likely to be affected by the disorder, with up to 15 percent of those who have eating disorders affected by night eating disorder.

Many of those affected by the syndrome diet (or at least try to) during the day, leaving them hungry and very weak to binge eating during the night when their control to achieve weight loss gets weakened by sleep. Some people have medical histories of drug abuse, alcoholism, and other sleep disorders such as restless legs, sleep apnea, and sleep walking. They often get tired upon waking up due to fragmented sleep. Many NS-RED cases seem to run along family lines.

How can you eat and unable to remember doing so?

Actually, that could really happen. While research on this disorder is still not that comprehensive, there is a high probability that there are parts of the brain that are truly sleeping even though some parts stay wide awake. Also asleep are the parts that regulate your waking

consciousness, so it is no wonder that you cannot remember any memories of gorging on food on the night before.

Is NS-RED curable? What should you do if you have it?

Thank god, treatment is available for your night eating disorder. Treatment starts with a medical interview as well as spending a night or two in a good sleep-disorders center where you brain activity can be monitored. Medication is sometimes helpful, but you should avoid taking sleeping pills as they can aggravate your sleep disorder by adding to the clumsiness and confusion upon waking up and may cause you injury as can regular use of these pills.

Yes, there is treatment. It begins with a clinical interview and a night or two at a sleep-disorders center where brain activity is monitored. Sometimes medication is helpful, but sleeping pills should be avoided. They can make matters worse by increasing confusion and clumsiness that can lead to injury. Regular use of sleeping pills can also lead you to dependency. It would be better that you ask a doctor on what medication to take.

Sleeping Disorders #2 - Restless Legs Syndrome

Do you experience painful leg muscles and an abnormally uncontrollable desire to move around just to partially relieve the pain? Beware of those symptoms for it could be a sign of a more serious illness.

The following section you are about to read diligently tackles the common misconceptions facts about the restless legs syndrome and properly identify the symptoms characterizing such disease and how you can empower yourself and people suffering from them.

Facts and Symptoms

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is a type of neurological sickness which is characterized by painful leg muscles which continues unless they are drawn into physical action.

These distinctive symptoms are in some ways suggestive of motor and sensory malfunction in which uncontrollable urge to move is more prominent.

That means, as leg musculature are relaxed, the more frequent the occurrence of symptoms are. People with this disease feel an abnormally unpleasant feeling of muscle dragging which reduces in severity as the legs are physically maneuvered as in the case of walking or jogging.

It afflicts people of all ages and both genders. Given the current statistics, females and older individuals are apt to develop the symptoms.

Causes

Restless Legs Syndrome is of idiopathic type; meaning its exact cause and origin is not yet known. Currently, scientists are working on locating the part of the brain, which triggers the condition, and genetically identifying the gene which transmits such trait to other cells and other physiological and nutritional factors which activates the episodes of pain in the leg and foot region.

The conditions peculiar to this disease usually occur when the legs are in the resting state. Idleness triggers the symptoms by which this disease is known and manifests patients suffering from this ailment. Burning and creeping sensations are just some of the most common feeling.

Collating all the symptoms, we can identify them as follows:

1. The desire to move the legs due to uncomfortable pain
2. Pain becoming more pronounced and advancing at night
3. Involuntary movement of the legs during sleep.
4. Onset of symptoms occurs during periods of inactivity and relieved once the legs are moved

The disease affects a considerable number of people worldwide. In fact, according to the latest Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation studies, more than 8% of the US population may be harboring this neurological condition. This can be translated to more than 12 million people currently diagnosed and exhibiting such remarkable conditions.

Due to the commonality of symptoms and their apparent similarity to other diseases, RLS patients are more often than not misdiagnosed which in turn result to unsuccessful medical treatment.

Much to the patient's dismay is that, little attention and funding is dispensed on this type of disease suggesting the slow progress to unveiling the mystery of restless legs syndrome and helping patients suffering on it.

Treatment

Perhaps, one reason for unsuccessful treatment is due to patient's attitude over the symptoms. Typical indications of the disease are ignored due to the symptoms unpredictable pattern of attack sometimes occurring during wakefulness or at night or in the middle of the sleep.

Symptoms usually last for days or weeks or usually progress to weeks and disappear for weeks or months. Pain eventually reappears with less intensity after a day or weeks and even for months.

These apparent incalculable occurrences of symptoms make treatment difficult to reconcile. More so, the disease may progress due to the inappropriate treatment applied as the symptoms are ignored.

Since causes remain unidentified, medical treatments are yet to be discovered. A couple of treatment is to relieve the symptoms and not specifically cure them.

Additional Findings

Restless sleep syndrome is usually confused with Periodic Limb Movement in Sleep Disorder (PLMD). Individuals affected by this disorder are identified with the same type of symptoms as in the case of RLS patients but the main difference is that, as the name suggest, it occurs only while asleep and is usually the main cause of insomnia in patients with sleep disorder.

Kicking, flailing primarily of the legs and arms are just some of the most common stereotypical movements. While most RLS patients have PLMD, not all PLMD symptoms develop to RLS.

Genetics

There has been mounting evidence that RLS may be inherited. In a study conducted on 2001, 14 RLS patients among those 25 French-Canadian individuals apparently suggest the autosomal recessive mode of transmission of RLS.

In autosomal recessive type of inheritance, 2 copies of gene that codes for the disease should be present in order for the effects to materialize in a living species.

Now what does this mean to us? This implies that the chances of developing the disease are enhanced when either your parents have a family history of the disorder or both of them somehow exhibited the condition or are carriers of the condition.

Conclusions

If you experience any of the conditions above, it is best to seek the medical help of your physician so that proper treatment and guidance will be patterned should the disease was identified as RLS. Early detection and treatment is necessary early treatment and to lessen at the very least, the symptoms associated with the disease.

Sleeping Disorders #3 - Circadian Rhythms Syndrome

Sleep forms part of human's biological need to rest. As a person sleeps, the various physiological processes of a human body figuratively put into an apparent arrest and some parts of our system that were mostly exploited can be replenished for future use.

However, imagine a system so disrupted that our normal scheduling for sleeping and waking is totally altered. Some people tend to sleep early and wake up early in the morning and some cannot sleep early and as a consequence, wakes up late.

These and other sleep-related problems are manifestations of a malfunctioning biological circadian clock and characterize several forms of Circadian Rhythm Syndrome. Circadian activity is a unique by 24-hour period or cycles in which our body is physically patterned.

24-hour vs. 25-hour cycle

Earth rotates around the sun in a 24-hour cycle, so as our body functions in this 24-hour time schedule. All living organisms charismatically subscribe to this cyclic resting and activity patterns so that their body could function in sync with the environment in which they live.

Although humans externally operate under a 24-hour environment, research found that our body clocks evidently works significantly different than what we see in the environment.

It shows that the human body closely behaves as if it were under a 25-hour environment. Convincingly, humans' reluctance to wake up at a required time and sleeping late at night probably explains this theory.

To compensate for this discrepancy, the body uses time "cues" to effectively counter-manage this asynchronous rhythmical. Setting an alarm helps us wake up at a designated time of the day and allows us to function as if it were under the 24-hour rhythmic schedule.

Dark vs. Light

Light and temperature provides the determining factor by which the body responds to the 24-hour activity period. The presence or absence of light primarily affects the part of the brain which paces your bodily activities.

It was believed that the fundamental locus or location of our biological clock is the brain specifically in the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) of the hypothalamus.

In complex animals like humans, hypothalamus forms part of the autonomous nervous system which in part, controls the functions of organs that are not voluntarily controlled, hence involuntary. Involuntary, meaning, they are not governed by conscious will to act. These include breathing, heart beat and intestinal digestion.

Eyes, Light and SCN

One interesting point to make is that the location of SCN is just above the optic chiasma (cross). Optic chiasma can be described as a location where optic nerve fibers meet and cross (chiasma-cross).

It is fitting to say that, the perception of light through the opening in the eyes, triggers the wake/sleep patterns in humans since this is one way the organism receives such physical message.

As retina (a portion of the eye where initial image of an object is stored) traps light rays, optic fibers relay the image to the brain via characteristic electrical pulses.

This unique sensory impulse is carried along the optic fibers to the occipital lobe (rear part) of the brain and is perceived as images. The proximity of the optic chiasma to the SCN perhaps provides the opportunity for the hypothalamus to “sense” the referred electrical impulses.

Forms of Circadian Rhythms Syndrome/Disorders

Circadian Rhythm defects can come many distinct forms depending on the amount and timing of waking up and sleeping. Others, as in the case of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), result in the changes in the length of day and night.

People who tend to sleep at a later time of the day and wake up late as well are said to be exhibiting Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome (DSPS). These people tend to develop insomnia, an abnormal inability to take adequate amount of sleep due to not being able to sleep at the right time of the night.

Still, other people, especially the elderly, are more likely to sleep early around 7:00 PM and consequently wake up early around 1:00 AM or 2:00 AM. This is a symptom of disrupted natural biological rhythms known as Familial Advanced Sleep-Phase Syndrome (FASPS).

The amount of a substance called melatonin is also perceived as a motivating factor in sleep-related disorders in humans. In a study among vertebrate mammals, melatonin is secreted in response to the absence of light.

This means more melatonin is secreted in the period of darkness and less in the presence of light. It presupposes the idea that melatonin is related to the 24-hour sleep/wake cycle of every human being.

Genetics

A considerable research has been made with the objective of locating the gene responsible for the emergence of these disorders. One research study published in Science on January 12, 2001, a monthly scientific journal, shows that the Familial Advanced Sleep-Phase Syndrome was a result of an apparent mutation of hPer2 gene.

But much has to be known about the function of the normal form of this gene and its adverse effect in mutated forms while considering its relation to other sleep-related illnesses.

Recommendations

With the knowledge gained in the preceding discussion, it can be assumed that the presence and absence of light affects our sleeping/waking schedule. With these in mind, keep yourself committed to your schedule to rest and sleep and set aside things which are not really important.

Keep your room as dark and gloomy as possible, to make it easy for you to sleep. Colorful objects stimulate your senses and disrupt sleep. Keep it ventilated and air-conditioned.

Studies show that as we sleep, our body temperature drops and allows the neurotransmitter melatonin to be produced at a rapid pace.

Keep those things in mind and do not forget to seek medical help should your condition progresses.

Sleeping Disorders #4 - Conditioned Insomnia

Several reports show that people who do not get enough sleep have the tendency to be sluggish, weak, sickly, and passive. This goes to show that people who are deprived from restful sleep are greatly affected in term of their work performance and the way they communicate and interact with other people. There are cases wherein people who are usually unable to sleep well tend to be irritable and unproductive.

Health experts contend that the classification and the intensity of the condition of the person being deprived from a good night's sleep determine the kind of problem that he or she has. In fact, they even insist that these symptoms of sleeping disorders are indicative of life-threatening conditions that other people just take for granted.

Hence, it is extremely important for physicians and other health experts to identify these problems immediately so as to avoid harnessing further problems that may lead to death.

Surveys show that almost 30 million Americans are said to be suffering from persistent sleeping disorder, while others are said to have episodic or momentary sleeping problems.

Furthermore, reports assert that 2% to 4% of the adult population are currently suffering from a sleeping disorder known as sleep apnea. On the other hand, 5-10% of the whole populace is experiencing chronic insomnia. The rest of the percentage of the population suffer from other forms of sleeping disorders such as periodic limb movement disorder, narcolepsy, restless leg syndrome, etc.

Among the different sleeping disorders, insomnia is being considered deadly serious by almost all of the people who suffer from sleeping disorders. This is because insomnia triggers the individual to doze off to sleep unexpectedly during the day due to lack of sleep they had during the night.

Insomnia is generally characterized by inadequate amount of sleep brought about by a wide range of factors such as waking up more often during sleep at night, difficulty in falling asleep and falling back to sleep, restless sleep, and waking up too early in the morning considering the fact that the person had only slept for a few hours only, say, two or three hours.

Basically, insomnia occurs to people who have been ill for quite sometime, those who came from travel, changes in the environment, jet lag, stress from recent work-related problems, psychological problems, etc.

These conditions manifest what most people know as sporadic or transient insomnia. This type of insomnia usually last for a short period of time only and will soon be eradicated.

However, there are instances wherein people suffer more than just what transient insomnia indicates. Here, chronic insomnia is said to be causing more dangerous cases of insomnia.

Chronic Insomnia

The term chronic simply means unceasing, therefore, when experts tell people they have chronic insomnia, this means that the kind of insomnia that they experience are more constant compared to the transient insomnia.

Generally, people who have chronic insomnia suffer from difficulty of falling asleep that have the tendency to become so weakening that other signs of different illness follow.

Failure to treat this kind of insomnia will result to what health experts define as conditioned insomnia or those that is constant in its occurrence. This type of insomnia has symptoms that will last for longer period of time, usually from 6 months to a year or even longer.

Conditioned insomnia is characterized by a persistent and worsening condition of the person suffering from the basic conditions of insomnia.

It may pose dilemma to people who experience it but the problem does not lie on the conditions it manifests but on the inability of the person to identify the underlying cause of the problem. That is why it is extremely important to know what insomnia is all about and what causes such condition.

The Truth about Insomnia

Contrary to most popular beliefs, insomnia is neither a disease nor a malady. It is simply a symptom of an underlying problem that needs to be treated first so as to cure insomnia. Some of the causes of insomnia are psychological problems such as stress and depression, poor sleeping hygiene, emotional problems, medications, physical disorders, etc.

Statistics show that insomnia is more prevalent in old people where the sleeping pattern changes. This is because older people sleep most during the day as they would in the night.

In turn, they find it really difficult to sleep during the night. Usually, manifestations of insomnia are also good indicators of another problem—the Alzheimer's disease.

Generally, people who experience conditioned insomnia often experiences irritability, fatigue, and have problems in getting their work done that usually results to stress.

So, the best solution to this problem is to identify the cause of insomnia so as to cure the problem all throughout.

Normally, the treatment includes bright light therapy that help reset the human's biological clock, hypnotics, certain medications that contains antihistamines, and melatonin or drugs that aids in minimizing jet lags.

Indeed, there are no hard or fast rules in treating insomnia. However, the only best way to treat the problem is to know the cause. After which, the individual can soon start sleeping normally and peacefully.

Sleeping Disorders #5 - Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a health condition far more serious than what most would think of. Sleep apnea is a health condition that happens when one's breathing during sleep stop for a while, usually 10 seconds or even longer. Sleep apnea could happen 5 to 45 times per hour.

Sleep apnea is usually associated with choking sensations and often leads to headaches and sleepiness during the day. Its moderateness or severity is measured with respect to the frequency of episodes per hour, whether you have no breathing (apnea) or slower breathing (hyponea).

Sleep apnea occurs mostly but not limited to men and not specific to any age group. Loud snoring is usually associated with apnea. People with high blood pressure and obese are most likely to developed sleep apnea. Problems in the nose, throat, and air passageway can also cause sleep apnea. Early detection of sleep apnea is very important since it is usually implies an underlying health conditions such as heart problems.

In some cases, apnea happen when the muscles in the throat & tongue relax when one is sleeping, which eventually lead to blockage of the air passageway to some varying degree. Then breathing becomes noisier, slow, or even stop for a while. Obese people have great possibilities of having sleep apnea since they have more tissue in the airway that makes it narrow for normal breathing.

Sleep apnea makes an active person feel sleepy in the morning and affects their concentration in work. Severe sleep apnea could lead to depression, memory losses, irritability, and other negative socio-psychological conditions. Sleep apnea could increase the risk of having a heart attack, high blood pressure and even stroke. **One should suspect having a sleep apnea disorder when the following conditions occur:**

1. Heavy snoring during sleep while struggling to breath. This is usually monitored by the spouse or room mate.
2. Co-workers noticing one's lack of concentration at work and falling to sleep frequently.
3. Headaches upon waking up from sleep.
4. Frequent urination at night.
5. Heartburn during the night.
6. Frequent changing in sleep position restlessly.
7. Night time choking episodes.

Detecting sleep apnea is a collaborative effort among your family physician, neurologist, and pulmonologist. Among the tests for diagnosing person with such disorder are Polysommography and The Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT). Polysomnography monitors different functions of the body during sleep such as brain activity, movement of the eye, movement of the muscles, heart beating, blood oxygen. The test will also determine whether the condition is moderate or severe. The Multiple Sleep Latency Test (MSLT) measures how fast the individual fall into sleep. Normal people fall into sleep in 10 to 20 minutes on the average while people with sleep apnea disorder fall into sleep in 5 minutes or less. Additionally, MSLT is use to measure the daytime sleepiness of the person.

Types of treatments for sleep apnea;

1. Behavioral Therapy. Is usually all that is needed for a mild case. It changes the person behavior towards the use of alcohol, tobacco which affects the airway. For an obese person, the therapy also includes weight loss program. Overweight persons can benefit from losing weight. Even a small amount of weight loss will lower the frequency of apnea in majority of patients.

2. Physical or Mechanical Therapy. Here is one of the most effective ways of treating sleep apnea. During the therapy, the patient wears a mask on his nose during sleep while applying air pressure to the nasal passages. The therapy provides air pressure to keep the airway from narrowing.

3. Surgery for adults. Surgery is considered only when other alternative therapy failed or if the patient volunteered to. Surgery aims to remove unnecessary tissue build-up in the throat to open up the airway.

The best cure to sleep apnea is prevention. There are several ways to prevent one from having to develop sleep apnea and reduce the frequency of the attacks:

1. Many Sleep apnea patients are obese. Maintaining a healthy weight is a sure way to prevent the frequency of apnea episodes since it increases the volume of oxygen in the blood. Studies showed that a 10 percent decrease in weight would reduce the frequency of apnea episodes up to 26 percent.

2. Avoid or at least limit alcohol intake.

3. Avoid or limit the use of tranquilizers, sleeping pills.

4. Have time for enough sleep. Lack of sleep increase the frequency of apnea attacks.

5. Treat allergies and runny nose promptly.

6. Avoid sleeping on your back.

Sleep apnea is a serious disease. It could be just a symptom of other more serious illness such as hypertension and heart disease. Should you suspect having the symptoms, take time to visit your family physician. Early detection and diagnoses of sleep apnea could save your life.

Chapter 5: Who Gets Sleep Apnea?

Sleep Apnea: How dangerous is it?

Before reading through the rest of this chapter, please answer the following questions:

- Do you regularly snore a lot? Is your snoring so loud that you or someone is awakened by it?
- Does it ever happen to you that you wake up abruptly, often choking or gasping for air?
- At daytime, do you feel extremely sleepy? Even if you're doing something, do you have a hard time staying awake to finish it?
- Do you have dry mouth, headaches, sore throat once you wake up in the morning?

If you answer YES to all these questions, then you probably have the sleep disorder apnea.

Sleep apnea is a deadly sleep disorder that gets worse as you grow older. Not only is sleep apnea causes you sleep deprivation, but worse, it can pose danger to your life.

Anyone can have sleep apnea. According to recent statistics, at least 12 million American suffer from sleep apnea. Majority of those suffering from sleep apnea are overweight and heavily snorers.

What are the symptoms of sleep apnea? These are:

- Snoring loudly and regularly;
- Are overweight;
- Suffering from high-blood pressure;

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- Have small airways sized in the nose, mouth, and throat; and
- Has at least one from your family that have been suffering or suffered from apnea.

This sleep disorder affects more men than women. Out of 25 middle-aged guys, one suffers from sleep apnea while only one out of 50 women suffers from it.

Based on statistics, sleep apnea occurs more commonly in Americans of African descent, Hispanics, and those living in the Pacific Islands. If your family has a sleep apnea case, then it is highly probable that you would get one too.

Sleep apnea also occurs with children, with its most common symptom as snoring.

What are the common sleep apnea symptoms?

- Loud snoring
- Gasping or choking for air during sleep
- Drowsiness and extreme desire to sleep at day time, even while you're at work or driving

Others signs may include:

- Morning headaches
- Learning or memory problems
- Feeling irritable
- Inability to concentrate
- Mood swings or changes in personality

- Dry throat upon waking up
- At night, frequent urination

How could you diagnose if you have sleep apnea?

These are some ways to help specialists know if you have sleep apnea.

- Checking your medical history, including asking you, your family, and officemates on how you sleep and how you work at day
- Examining if you have large or extra tissues in your mouth, throat, or nose.
- Recording your sleep to check your breathing pattern.

How could you be treated for sleep apnea?

The goal in treating your sleep apnea is to restore back your regular breathing during the night and solving symptoms such as loud snoring and sleepiness during the day.

If you suffer from a mild case, some changes in your daily habits or activities could lead to the treatment.

- Stay away from alcoholic beverages, sleep-inducing medications, and smoking.
- Try to shed off some pounds if your weight borders on the plus side.
- Instead of sleeping on your back, try sleeping sideways.

People who have cases that are severe or even moderate should try these treatments:

- Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)

The most frequent treatment for moderate and severe sleep apnea cases, CPAP allows you to have the right amount of airway pressure in your mouth to keep the throat open as you sleep.

If not used correctly or abruptly stopped, your disorder will come back.

Ask your doctor for any possible effects from using CPAP.

- Mouthpiece

A mouthpiece or an oral appliance may prove to be useful to those who have mild cases of sleep apnea.

A customized mouthpiece will keep your throat airways open as you sleep. Just check with your orthodontist or dentists if you might suffer from side effects. Make sure that the mouthpiece fits.

- Surgery

In some cases, surgery is the ultimate solution. You just have to consult with your doctor the nature of the surgery and if there are possible health repercussion after you have completed the surgery.

At present, there aren't any medications yet that could treat sleep apnea. But this should not sadden you. With the help of medical specialists, solving your sleep apnea could be attainable.

Chapter 6: How Sleep Apnea Manifests Insomnia

The clinical definition of a sleeping disorder is a disruptive pattern of sleep that may include difficulty in falling or staying asleep, falling asleep at inappropriate times, excessive total sleep time, or abnormal behaviors associated with sleep.

There are four basic categories that each sleeping disorder can be put into: insomnia, hypersomnia, sleep disruptive disorders, and basic trouble with adhering to a normal sleep pattern. Some symptoms of having a sleeping disorder are: difficulty in falling asleep, daytime drowsiness, loud snoring, fatigue, depression, anxiety and lower leg movements during sleep.

Sleep apnea is a common disorder in which a person's breathing stops during sleep for 10 seconds or more, sometimes more than 300 times a night.

There are two main types of sleep apnea. The first is Obstructive Sleep Apnea which may represent the stoppage of breathing due to a mechanical blockage of the airway. The second is Central Sleep Apnea which appears to be related to a malfunction of the brain's normal signal to breathe.

Some of the symptoms of sleep apnea may include restless sleep, loud and heavy snoring which is often interrupted by silence and then gasps, falling asleep while driving or when the person is at work or at home while watching TV, morning headaches, loss of energy, trouble concentrating, and mood or behavioral changes.

Snoring is usually associated with apnea. Snoring is defined as noisy breathing one occurs during sleep when the flow of air through the airways is blocked or when the airways vibrate during breathing.

Several factors tend to make people snore: nasal congestion, being overweight, smoking, drinking alcohol before bedtime, and sleeping on your back. Sleeping pills, painkillers and other drugs that cause drowsiness can also make snoring more likely.

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Because a person is not able to sleep well or not get good nights sleep, some doctors are now conducting research to see how Apnea manifests insomnia since both interferes with the daytime functioning of a person. Some causes which still have to be confirmed are the certain medicines available in the market to treat such disorder; medical conditions, excess stress, or poor sleep habits can all affect the quality of your sleep.

To check if a person has a sleeping disorder, a diagnosis is made by a physician specially trained in sleep medicine. After a physical examination of the upper airway and an interview with lots of questions, if the tests have determined that the patient has a sleeping disorder, one will have to undergo a polysomnogram (sleep test). Most sleep centers and labs monitor 16 different sleep parameters including EEG, EKG, eye movement, chin movement, air flow, chest effort, abdomen effort, SaO₂, snoring and leg movement. Each parameter serves to help the physician make a correct diagnosis.

Tests are conducted in a sleep room much like a motel room. A technician will paste electrodes at certain points on your head, face, body and legs. Those electrodes will be hooked to monitoring equipment that will record the entire night study. Most patients do not experience anxiety or difficulty in going to sleep. The patients in most cases are extremely sleepy and will be asleep in just a few minutes.

Once a correct diagnosis has been made, the doctor may recommend a variety of treatments available for those that suffer from sleep apnea, including medications, behavioral therapy, and, in extreme cases, surgery.

Although over-the-counter sleep aids may be helpful it is not advisable to use these products on a regular basis. These sleep aids don't eliminate the problem but only provide temporary relief and may become less effective after a few days of use.

Doctors however often recommend a prescription device called a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device for patients with sleep apnea. During sleep, the patient wears a mask that fits over the nose. The mask is attached to an air compressor adjusted to blow enough air through the nose to keep the airway open. If a CPAP device doesn't help, then surgery on the upper airway may be the last resort.

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By developing good sleeping habits, one may be able to break the pattern of sleeplessness without needing other therapies. Good habits include going to bed and waking up at a regular time, eliminating naps, and avoiding stimulation from exercise or caffeine shortly before bedtime. Relaxation techniques and changes in diet can also help some people.

Chapter 7: Insomnia in Infants and Children

Silent Night: Treating Insomnia in Infants and Children

There are some people who have problems falling asleep each and every night. If they do, chances are they are afflicted by a psychological sleeping disorder called insomnia. Usually, people suffering from insomnia blame this for too much stress, worries, depression and a very worrisome life.

People mostly believe that these feelings cannot be experienced by infants and children because they are too young to worry about anything. Based on this reasoning, some people think that insomnia would not occur in children. But this is not true. Just like adults, insomnia can also happen to children and infants.

Children have different sleeping habits and time patterns. For infants who are one week old, the average length of sleep per day is 16 hours. There are parents that believe that babies who sleep less are geniuses or have a high I.Q. But there is no scientific evidence to support this belief. Babies usually wake once every evening at the minimum. Unless breast fed, infants can go back to sleep on their own.

Insomnia or sleeping disorders can be defined in the following parameters:

- Having a hard time to sleep at night
- A person who wakes up very early
- A person who wakes up often at night

This ailment can cause the feeling of tiredness and drowsiness even after waking up in the morning. A person with insomnia also has a hard time concentrating.

Other terms for insomnia are Wakefulness, Sleeplessness and Dysomnia.

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Infants usually wake up frequently at night. At the sixth month, babies basically have a normalized nocturnal pattern by being asleep the whole night. When the infant reaches a year old, he or she sleeps at a rate of 16 hours per 24 hours. The baby will sleep during daytime from 2 to 3 hours.

Reasons why babies suffer from insomnia:

- They want their parents to notice them
- They may be suffering from digestive ailments or infantile colic which is a condition where babies cry for more than 3 hours a day.
- Infants that are often hungry
- Their teeth are beginning to grow
- They may be ill or afflicted by a disease

Here are some tips in curing insomnia for infants:

- Try not to comfort the baby immediately when crying at night. It would be best to wait until the infant stops crying on his or her own. Constant attention can be a stimulus for infants to stay awake at night.
- Observe if the child is unable to sleep because of excessive noise. Try playing classical or slow songs to cover up noisy environment.
- Do not make a child go to bed as a penalty or reprimand for something. This can cause insomnia because instead of them enjoying being asleep, they dread it.
- Parents should not make an infant accustomed to falling asleep in their arms. When the baby is already six months old, try making them used to fall asleep on their cribs by themselves.
- Reading stories in bed, tapping or scratching a child before sleeping, singing a lullaby is often a cause of insomnia because without these routines children will be unable to sleep.
- Do not give a child sleep inducing medicine unless the doctor advises it. As much as possible, do not use chemicals or drugs in curing insomnia.
- Remember that sleeping pills may have side effects.
- If the condition remains after trying home measures to cure insomnia, consult a doctor.

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To cure infant insomnia, parents should be ready to let their baby cry without comfort until they learn to sleep by themselves. They can also try to slowly lessen the attention that they give each night to put an infant to sleep until they can totally do it without parent's supervision.

Children especially infants need enough and regular sleep for them to grow healthy emotionally and physically. Parents should be very sensitive and vigilant in observing their child's sleeping habit. Eventually both the parents and the child will be affected by insomnia if this is not given attention. The bedroom should be a place to sleep and should be peaceful not rowdy. A bedroom is not a room for a child's play but for a child's restful evening.

Finally, sleeplessness is a sign of a mind not at peace. A child is always an angel and an angel should always be at peace. Making your baby grow like an angel is not easy and most of the time it takes sacrifices. In time, parents can sleep soundly at night because their child grew up to be a good person; all because they made their child sleep right since birth.

Chapter 8: Treating Insomnia - Do OTC Meds Work?

“Treating Insomnia: Is having sweet dreams just a dream?”

A person who is suffering from sleepless nights, someone who frequently wakes up at night and rises up early in the morning even though that person does not have enough sleep is having a sleeping disorder known as insomnia.

Insomnia is a condition in which a person is not getting enough sleep. This person when awakened at night has a hard time sleeping again. Insomnia can happen every night, from time to time or in a period of time.

Here are the some suggestions wherein insomnia can be treated:

1. Follow a positive routine.

If an insomniac has an erratic eating routine, this should be changed to a fixed routine dedicated to directly fight insomnia. The person should eat early dinner so as to condition the body to sleep early.

2. Do not drink coffee.

As much as possible, a person with insomnia should avoid drinking coffee, sodas, chocolate, cocoa, green tea, black tea or anything that has caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant that triggers sleeplessness. It can make someone awake for as long as 20 hours. For some, even drinking a cup of coffee in the morning causes them sleeplessness at night.

3. Exercise at night.

Insomnia is often caused by too much stress. Doing exercise at night makes blood to circulate in our brain and body. This in turn makes us calm and stress free.

4. The bedroom should be conducive to sleep.

Loud noise coming from cars in the street, upbeat music set at very high volume, bright lights and uncomfortable bed should be avoided.

5. Read not watch.

Read books, magazines or anything that interests an insomniac instead of watching television. Television enhances attention which makes a person awake. Reading on the other hand while in bed causes the eye to get tired and creates a sleepy feeling.

6. Relax

Try ways that causes our body to relax. Meditation technique like yoga can initiate a calm state of mind and body. Listening to soft and classical music can also help. There are fragrant oils, incense, and candles that are made specifically to aid in relaxation. Consult a shop that sells these on type of scents that can induce sleep.

7. The root solution for insomnia.

There are root extracts that can engender a sleepy state. 300 to 600 mg of concentrated extract should be taken 30 minutes prior to going to bed. This root extract can be mixed with calming herbs like chamomile, passion flower and balm made from lemon.

8. Take melatonin with caution

Melatonin can help in adjusting one's sleeping pattern. 0.5 to 3.0 mg an hour or two before going to bed may help. Melatonin though should only be taken with the approval of a physician. The human body has different reactions to melatonin.

As people grow older, the melatonin level of the body decreases. This explains why older people usually have a hard time sleeping and sleep less compared to children and younger people.

9. Magnesium

Conditions such as restless legs syndrome (RLS) and period limb movements (PLM) while sleeping can cause insomnia. Taking 300 mg of magnesium at night from four to six weeks can solve insomnia. Again this should be done with doctor's consent.

10. Acupuncture

Acupuncture which is a Chinese healing method could help to heal insomnia. These needles put into the skin strike nerve transmitters that produce sleep inducing hormones like serotonin.

Natural methods in curing insomnia are always preferred but upon a doctor's approval the following over the counter medicines are formulated to stimulate sleep.

- Diphenhydramine (Excedrin, Nytol, Sominex)
- Doxylamine (Unisom)

The following on the other hand are medications that need to have doctor's prescription to avail:

- Zolpidem (Ambien)
- Zaleplon (Sonata)
- Flurazepam (Dalmane)
- Estazolam (ProSom)
- Temazepam (Restoril)
- Triazolam (Halcion)

Although these medicines are chemicals that trigger sleep, long periods of usage lessens its effectiveness.

Altering a person's diet is effective in preventing and healing insomnia. Doctors suggest eating food that is high in carbohydrate prior to sleep. Examples of these are bread and crackers. Studies showed that carbohydrates enhance the quantity of serotonin produced by the body. Serotonin is a chemical messenger or neurotransmitter that affects the brain. This chemical lessens anxiety which in turn creates sleep.

Consulting a psychologist or psychiatrist may give light in solving insomnia. This sleeping disorder is usually caused by stress. A psychologist or psychiatrist can give expert advice on how to treat insomnia.

There are natural methods, practices, over the counter medicines and prescribed medicines that can be the solution to insomnia. It would be best to consult a doctor on this disorder for sound guidance towards a sound sleep.

Chapter 9: Curing Insomnia with Behavior Modification

Drinking 2 cups of coffee translates to 2 hours of tossing and turning in bed. While the preceding sentence is not categorically accurate, it's a fact that most of our behaviors effectively disrupts our sleep patterns and the length of time we can enjoy those restful hours of our life.

It was found that the quality of your sleep tells much about your state of mind and overall health. This is perfectly verified in individuals who were deprived of sleep. They find it hard to concentrate; they get sick and are always irritated.

Before we discuss how lifestyle changes can restore those treasured restful sleep, let us first find out the basic facts about sleeping and how it can help us to be a better individual every time we wake up!

Exactly how much sleep do you need in a day?

The amount of sleep a person needs actually depends on the age and amount of physical and mental activity a person engages to. For example, an infant who does not perform any strenuous task and undergoing a period of rapid growth needs 16 to 18 hours of sleep.

The same thing applies to teenagers who are experiencing the biological challenges of puberty. More often than not they require at least 9 hours of sleep every night for that matter.

Adults, on the other hand, requires 7 to 8 hours of sleep a day but changes if one engages to a vigorous activity which requires too much bodily strength. From this figures alone, we can see that sleep requirement varies from person to person.

Moreover, older individuals in their 60s above usually sleep a bit shorter due to some physical factors researchers are trying to find out. One study even shows as the body grows older the amount of melatonin, the chemical which induces sleep, a body produces diminishes and becomes irregular.

It doesn't take to be a rocket scientist to understand the benefits of sleeping. But in some ways, to practically appreciate the benefits of a thing, we sometimes need to experience the consequences it creates when it's omitted.

Consequences of Sleep Deprivation

There are just tons of things to see about people who don't get to have enough of restful sleep. Some of them are outlined below:

- Reduced mental coordination
- Poor concentration and memory lapses
- Apparent loss of appetite
- Dulling skin
- Impaired immune response
- Depression
- Unexplainable onset of anxiety
- Digestion and bowel problems

Stop counting those sheep!

Sleepless night is just something that scares most busy people. It affects our professional commitments and for some parents, affects their relationship with their children and husband or wife. Worst, it carries the potential to destroy our social interests little by little.

Before we get to complain the toll of busy life let us first analyze the various behaviors affecting our sleeping habits.

Too much of this and that – Too much of everything is always bad said the old cliché. Too much workload and heavy eating sometimes lead to wakefulness because your body is working hard digesting them.

Try cutting those fats and carbs and consume just the right amount of them and see the difference it does to your sleeping program.

Coffee Please! – Throw those coffee makers away – at least before sleeping. :) Refrain from drinking coffee and other carbonated products such as colas 3 hours before you sleep.

Caffeine contained in these products induces you to remain awake even for hours. Stomach gases produced by acids in carbonated drinks causes periodic episodes of wakefulness during sleep.

Stay calm – Give your muscles a chance to rest. It pays. Rigorous physical stress like jogging, lifting weights and other types of exercises wakes you up and disrupts your sleeping schedule.

It worth mentioning that regular exercise is critical to restful sleep, however, it should be noted that this must be done with utmost consideration to your sleeping time program. Exercising before sleeping keeps you awake for hours.

Bed equals sleep – Doing other activities in bed other than sleeping and sex is one way of ruining that chance to rest. Accomplish work-related task in a designated area and allow your body to identify bed as a place to relax.

Keep up with the schedule – Remember to commit yourself in the usual schedule you are supposed to sleep. Your body keeps its own “biological clock” or circadian rhythm and routinely checks if you are keeping up with your daily obligation!

Eat right! – The types of food you eat greatly affect how you sleep. There are foods which contribute to helping you sleep, called “sleepers” and foods termed “wakers”, which stimulate the body to move.

Dairy products, grains, soy products, eggs and rice are examples of sleepers. They contain amino acid tryptophan which relaxes your nerves. It's like reducing the commotion happening on those little cells of yours and helps them cast off their tensions.

On the other hand, “wakers” are foods such as those loaded with proteins such as pork and caffeinated food commodities such as chocolates, coffee, colas, and tea. These foods contain a

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great amount of amino acid tyrosine which revs up the activity of your brain. Knowledge in nutrition empowers you to choose the right kind of food for a specific type of activity and maintains an active but healthy life.

**** Bonus Articles ****

We always believe in providing immense value to our readers. Hence we are adding several bonus articles that give you more information on this subject. Enjoy!

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A Sleep Disorder That Affects the Legs - Restless Sleep Syndrome

Restless leg syndrome, known as RLS, is a sleep disorder that afflicts more than 15 percent of adults.

It affects more women than men and the incidence of restless leg syndrome increases with age. Certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, arthritis and varicose veins, also increase the risk of developing restless leg syndrome.

This sleep disorder is characterized by an uncontrollable urge to move the lower legs, knees and occasionally the arms. Sometimes painful sensations accompany the urge to move. People that suffer from this sleep disorder describe the feelings and sensations in different ways. Many describe a tingling, itching or pulling sensation. Still others say it feels prickly or burns. Some feel as if they have worms crawling under their skin.

The sensations which are typical of this sleep disorder can occur anytime during the day or night.

Restless leg syndrome occurring at night has a devastating effect on sleep. The symptoms can cause the sufferer to get in and out of bed repeatedly which can delay or disrupt sleep. Since sleep is repeatedly interrupted, extreme daytime sleepiness is common.

The combination of always feeling tired and the symptoms themselves can cause a person with restless leg syndrome to alter their lifestyle. Long trips, movies, concerts and eating in restaurants are some of the activities they usually avoid. Attending a long meeting at work can become very painful and uncomfortable. People that have this sleep disorder often suffer from depression.

Researchers believe that restless leg syndrome may be caused by malfunctions of the pathways in the brain that controls movement reflexes and sensations. Often this sleep disorder has a genetic base.

Restless leg syndrome cannot be diagnosed by one single test. Often standard neurological examinations show no signs of an abnormality. In many cases, a doctor makes the diagnosis of restless leg syndrome based on the description of the symptoms. They also take into account family history, and the results of a routine medical examination and blood tests.

Many times the treatment for restless leg syndrome is aimed at controlling the debilitating sensations that accompany this sleep disorder. Often iron supplements are prescribed because severe anemia has been linked to this disorder. Relaxation techniques, diet changes and the elimination of caffeine and alcohol help some sufferers of restless leg syndrome.

In most cases, this sleep disorder is treated with drugs. These drugs could include dopamine agents, benzodiazepines, opioids or anticonvulsants. Medications do not cure restless leg syndrome, but they manage the symptoms. People that suffer from this sleep disorder usually have to stay on their medications for the rest of their lives.

Another sleep disorder similar to restless leg syndrome is periodic limb movement disorder known as PLMD. There are two main differences between restless leg syndrome and periodic limb movement disorder. Restless leg syndrome occurs when the sufferer is awake or asleep; periodic limb movement disorder only occurs when the sufferer is asleep. Restless leg syndrome movements are voluntary responses to very unpleasant sensations; the movements of periodic limb movement disorder are involuntary and are not consciously controlled. Both of these sleep disorders can be effectively controlled with medical treatment.

An Alternative Approach for Overcoming a Sleep Disorder

Having a sleep disorder can be very disruptive to everyday life. Sleep deprived people are usually excessively tired and sleepy. They tend to become irritable and very emotional. At times they become a danger, not only to themselves, but also to those around them.

Some people use alternative, natural ways to lessen the effects of their sleep disorder. Many people focus on diet and nutrition, while others use herbs and supplements. Still others believe in the positive effect of exercise, relaxation and sensory techniques, meditation or behavioral and cognitive strategies. Often people use a combination of these approaches to help alleviate the symptoms of their sleep disorder.

A healthy diet is essential for optimal energy and a restful sleep. Avoiding certain foods is as important as including others in your daily diet. Eating a wide variety of foods and drinking plenty of water will keep your body well- balanced and provide a more stable energy level. Avoiding food that is grown, treated or processed with chemicals, and limiting the amount of sugar and caffeine will also help your overall physical condition. Many foods promote a restful sleep and are helpful in relieving some of the symptoms of certain sleep disorders. Eating the proper snack before bedtime can increase natural serotonin levels. Serotonin acts as a natural sedative and is made in the body from the amino acid tryptophan. Foods that are rich in tryptophan include chicken, turkey, cheese, cottage cheese, fish, milk, nuts, avocados and bananas.

Many people use herbs and natural supplements as an alternative approach to treating their sleep disorder. There are many nutritional supplements and herbal products on the market. It is important to know how a specific product acts on the body as well as on the specific sleep disorder.. For example many people with restless leg syndrome have an iron or folic acid deficiency. Taking an iron supplement may alleviate some of the symptoms of RLS. Many herbs are well known for promoting a natural sleep. A calming tea of chamomile or lemon balm can be very relaxing to many people that suffer from a sleep disorder.

Exercise and relaxation techniques, whether used alone or together, can reduce stress and muscle tension. Many people that use these techniques to lessen the symptoms of a sleep disorder do these before going to bed. They not only ease physical tension but they calm the mind and prepare the body to sleep. These techniques include mindful exercise, progressive muscle relaxation, breathing exercises and yoga.

Meditation and visualization are also used by some sufferers of sleep disorders to calm the body before sleep. Two common forms of mediation are meditation on the breath and mantra meditation. Both of these types can have a positive effect on relieving stress and calming the body. Many people focus their energy on a healing visualization as a method of alternative therapy for their sleep disorder.

Sensory techniques that people use to lessen the symptoms of their sleep disorder are hydrotherapy, and aroma therapy. The two main techniques included in hydrotherapy, which means water therapy, are relaxing in an Epsom salt bath and a lymph stimulating footbath. Aroma therapy includes the use of therapeutic essential oils in baths, massage oils, room sprays, and simple inhalants.

Alternative behavioral and cognitive strategies used to combat the symptoms of a sleep disorder include improving a person's sleep hygiene, stimulus control therapy and journal writing.

Alternative practices and techniques can help many types of sleep disorders. Often they are used in conjunction with traditional medication and practices.

Children With the Sleep Disorder of Sleepwalking

The sleep disorder of sleepwalking, also known as somnambulism, affects approximately 14% of school-age children between five and twelve years old at least once. Approximately one quarter of the children with this sleep disorder have more frequent episodes. Sleepwalking is more common in boys than it is in girls. Most children that sleepwalk outgrow the symptoms of this sleep disorder by adolescence as their nervous systems develop.

In children this sleep disorder is thought to be the result of the immaturity of the brain's sleep / wake cycle. Normally the entire brain wakes up at the same time. However, in the case of a sleepwalker, the entire brain does not wake up together. The portion that is responsible for mobility wakes up while the portion responsible for cognition and awareness stays asleep. The child is actually in a deep state of sleep.

With this sleep disorder the brain remains partially asleep but the body is able to move. It is common for the sleepwalker to get out of bed and walk around. Sometimes they get dressed or go outside. Even though the sleepwalker's eyes are open and they see what they are doing, their expression remains blank. They do not respond to conversation or their name being called. A sleepwalker's movements usually appear clumsy. It is not uncommon for them to trip over furniture or knock over things as they move around. A sleepwalking episode usually happens one to two hours after the child goes to sleep. Most of these episodes last for fifteen minutes or less, but some can last for an hour or more.

This sleep disorder in children is usually outgrown and treatment is not generally necessary. In most cases, a parent gently guiding the child back to bed is all that is needed. There is not any need to wake the child.

However, there is about 1% of the population that sleepwalk as adults. Adults that have this sleep disorder did not necessarily have it as a child. In adults a sleepwalking episode can be triggered by stress, anxiety, sleep fragmentation, sleep deprivation, or certain medical conditions such as epilepsy.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

Treatment for adults with this sleep disorder is often dependent upon the amount of danger they are in during an episode. For example, a sleepwalker who opens doors and goes outside onto a busy city street is in danger. A sleepwalker that gets up and goes into the living room and sits down on a chair most likely is not in danger. Treatments can include behavioral therapies, self hypnosis, or prescription medication.

A sleepwalker, whether adult or child, needs to have a safe area so that they do not get hurt during an episode. Precautions can be taken to eliminate some dangers. Parents should make sure the child's bedroom does not have any sharp or breakable objects. Doors should be locked at night to keep the sleepwalker from going outside. Sometimes it is necessary to put bells on doors to alert the sleeping parent that their child is sleepwalking. Large glass windows and doors should be covered with heavy drapery to lessen the chance of having the sleepwalker walk through it while it is closed.

A child with the sleep disorder of somnambulism needs to be protected and kept safe during an episode. It is the environment they are in that is the danger more than the sleep disorder itself.

Fatal Familial Insomnia

This is probably by far one of the rarest forms of sleeping disorders around. This is an inherited disorder that has only been found in 28 families in the world that have the dominant gene for it. The offspring of a parent(s) of developing the disorder is about 50% and there is no cure for this. The age of onset is around the ages between 30 and 60 and the disorder's time frame runs between 7 to 18 months. This disease has 4 stages that it goes through and 1st stage of the disease starts off with the sufferer dealing with increased insomnia leading to severe panic attacks, and various kinds of phobias, this stage lasts about 4 months, 2nd stage sufferer deals with hallucinations and panic attacks become more obvious and lasts about 5 months, 3rd stage Complete and total inability to sleep. And follows with drastic weight loss and lasts about 3 months, 4th stage Dementia sets in and progressively becoming unresponsive and mute over a course of 6 months and this is the final progression of the disease.

This sounds a lot like Alzheimer's because if you notice the time frame it's a lot less shorter than the actual time span of someone who deals with Alzheimer's because the sufferer is dealing with it for several years instead of a year where the disease progressively degenerates the mental capacity to such a degree that the sufferer has a hard time with memory.

As far as treatment is concerned sleeping pills don't have any effect for people suffering from Fatal Familial Insomnia and not even non-medicinal therapy doesn't work either. Medical science has no idea why it's a fatal disease and how they can create effective treatment options to combat this problem. And more effective genetic testing for diseases that are inherited to find out what can be done medicinally and therapeutically to deal with this sleeping disorder.

It's a matter of how much attention the medical world takes note of this and pushes the funding to finding a cure and effective genetic testing of families and tracking diseases through the generations to be able to have some kind of record of the disease passing down through generations or skipping generations which is what some diseases have done in some families for those who have a disposition for certain things.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

This doesn't get nearly as much attention as all the other sleeping disorders because of it being rare, and only turning up in so many people and births making it not rare enough for it to get the recognition as regular insomnia and to qualify for the treatments. That are currently out there to help those 60 million people who are dealing with some kind of sleeping disorder(s).

With the way medical science is going it will be a matter of time before medical science catches up and helps the many people who are looking for a cure of being deprived of a restful night's sleep. The moment a cure is found is one more person who will be helped to have a good night's rest.

How to Tell If You Have a Sleep Disorder

There are many people that have an undiagnosed sleep disorder. They may feel very sleepy during the day. They may have trouble falling to sleep or staying asleep. Friends or relatives may tell them they look very tired. They may experience mood changes, irritability or become overly emotional. Often they have difficulty paying attention, concentrating, or remembering things that are important. These are all symptoms of sleep deprivation, and possibly of a sleep disorder.

A person that has an undiagnosed sleep disorder will usually answer the question, "What is the problem with your sleep," with one of five answers. Those answers will be; "I have trouble falling asleep," "I have trouble staying awake," "I can't get up in the morning," "I seem to do strange things in my sleep" or "I can't sleep because of my partner." The particular answer chosen helps to narrow down the possibility of a specific type of sleep disorder.

When someone says "I can't fall asleep" it can mean several things. There could be a problem when first going to bed, after waking up in the middle of the night, or in the early morning hours. Many people have the problem of not being able to fall asleep when they go to bed. This is called sleep latency. Sleep latency can be a very serious symptom of certain sleep disorders, including sleep onset insomnia, delayed sleep phase disorder, shift work, restless leg syndrome or paradoxical insomnia. Many times the problem is not being able to stay asleep, which is sleep fragmentation. Often a person with this complaint can fall to sleep easily when they go to bed, but wake up often throughout the night. Sleep disorders may include sleep maintenance insomnia, shift work. If a person wakes up very early in the morning and cannot get back to sleep, it could be a sign of advanced sleep phase disorder or sleep maintenance insomnia.

If the answer to the question is "I can't stay awake" and the person is falling asleep at inappropriate times there may be a sleep disorder such as narcolepsy, obstructive or central sleep apnea, periodic limb movement disorder, restless leg syndrome, shift work or advanced sleep phase disorder.

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Those that say "I can't get up in the morning" and take an hour or more to fully wake from their sleep may suffer from excessive sleep inertia. They are having difficulty making the transition from sleep to being awake. Sleep disorders that could be responsible for excessive sleep inertia are sleep apnea and delayed sleep phase disorder.

A person that answers the question with "I do strange things in my sleep" may find that their sleep is full of surprises. Sleepwalking, Sleep terrors, confusional arousals, REM sleep behavior disorder, nightmares, sleep-related eating disorder and bruxism are all types of sleep disorders known as parasomnias.

If a person answers "I can't sleep because of my partner" snoring, sleep apnea, bruxism, restless leg syndrome, or periodic limb movement disorder may be the sleep disorder to blame.

How would you answer the question of "What is the problem with your sleep?"

Hypersomnia (oversleeping)

Most people don't realize they oversleep when they have a condition called hypersomnia and that's due in part to recurring episodes of excessive daytime sleeping and prolonged nighttime sleep. This is different from the average person taking that midday nap when they do it at sometimes the most inappropriate times like at work, during meals, or even in conversation with people.

Hypersomniacs are also diagnosed with narcolepsy, which can be quite dangerous because some individuals are behind the wheel of cars or even cooking in their home and aren't aware that they fell asleep. Some hypersomniacs and narcoleptics can fall asleep and then wake up and resume where they left off in conversations with people. Usually daytime naps usually provide no relief or symptoms to the problem(s) and will result in the individual(s) having increased difficulty in waking from a long extended period of sleeping, disorientation, anxiety, decreased energy, increased fatigue, restlessness, slow thinking, slow speech, loss of appetite, hallucinations, and problems with memory functions.

Some individuals also experience losing the ability to function in normal family, social, occupational, and other settings familiar to that person.

Hypersomnia can be triggered by sleep apnea or narcolepsy, where it can lead to dysfunction of the autonomic nerve system, which can be brought on, by acute alcohol and/or drug abuse. In some cases rare or not it can also be triggered from physical problems such as tumors, head trauma or injuries to the nervous system. Specific medications or withdrawal of medications and/or drugs may contribute to someone having hypersomnia. Medical conditions such as multiple sclerosis, depression, encephalitis, epilepsy, and obesity can contribute to hypersomnia as well.

It's also been noted that those who have hypersomnia are also genetically dispositioned to this problem whereas in others there's no known or documented cause. Hypersomnia typically affects adolescents and young adults in their 20s and 30s. Although the most common causes

of this disorder differs in the age brackets. Information can be located on the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes website if you're seeking a more thorough clinical explanation to this problem. This isn't a substitute for medical advice from a licensed physician so it's ideal to educate yourself, but leave the diagnosing and treatment to a doctor so that your condition can be monitored closely.

People who are not seeing a doctor when they identify problems that are not normal for them to experience are misdiagnosing too many issues with sleep. Persons who are severely obese can also have a difficult time losing the weight because of the fact that lack of sleep can increase the body's metabolic rate, which can trigger excessive hunger in those who are trying to lose weight.

This is why so many people who are obese are eating more than they should because a lot of them sleep so much that they wake up wanting to eat when they should be sleeping like normal people do and not up at all hours of the night wanting to eat. This is why it's harder for people who are obese to lose weight when they sleep too much and not training their body to rest instead of wanting to eat food.

Illnesses That Can Cause a Sleep Disorder

Many times a sleep disorder can be caused from an illness or from the medications used to treat an illness. Some of the common health conditions that can cause a sleeping problem are cardiovascular disease, endocrine disorders, neurological disorders, respiratory disease, mental illness, gastroesophageal reflux disease, kidney disease, and arthritis.

Cardiovascular disease includes congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease. These are the two most common heart problems that affect sleep and can cause a sleep disorder. Congestive heart failure occurs when the heart can no longer pump enough blood of the body's needs. Blood backs up in the veins of the heart which lead to the kidneys and edema eventually damages the lungs and other organs. People suffering from congestive heart failure have a very high risk of developing the sleep disorder of obstructive sleep apnea. Coronary heart disease is the build up of fatty deposits in the arteries that supply blood to the heart, called atherosclerosis. This condition also can lead to obstructive sleep apnea.

Sleep disorders can occur from endocrine disorders such as diabetes and thyroid disease. Diabetes is a disease that affects the way the body processes and uses carbohydrates, fats and proteins. People that have uncontrolled diabetes often develop the sleep disorder of restless leg syndrome. Thyroid hormones regulate the body's energy levels. Hyperthyroidism can make it difficult to fall asleep, and cause night sweats the person to wake.

Neurological disorders include Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, and strokes. Parkinson's disease is a central nervous system disorder. This disease causes problems with body motion, including tremors, unstable posture, slowed body movements, muscle stiffness, and difficulty walking. Sleep disorders that occur with this disease include REM sleep behavior disorder and sleep onset insomnia. Alzheimer's disease impairs the brain's intellectual functions and is the most common cause of dementia. This disease causes sleep fragmentation. Epilepsy causes recurrent, sudden, brief changes in the normal electrical activity of the brain. People with this condition are twice as likely to suffer from the sleep disorder insomnia. People that suffer a stroke usually also have obstructive sleep apnea.

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People that have respiratory diseases, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, usually also have a sleep disorder. Asthma is a chronic lung condition that makes breathing difficult when air passages become inflamed and narrow. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, known as COPD, refers to a group of disorders that damage the lungs and make breathing difficult. Many people with these conditions suffer from insomnia and sleep fragmentation.

Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder can also lead to a sleep disorder. People with these mental health disorders often suffer from sleep fragmentation and insomnia.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, known as GERD, causes the stomach's juices to flow backwards into the esophagus. This causes the sleep disorder of sleep fragmentation.

Kidney disease causes the kidneys to lose their ability to filter the proper amount of waste products from the blood and regulate the body's balance of salt and water. This can cause the sleep disorders of restless leg syndrome and insomnia to develop.

People with arthritis often find it difficult to fall asleep because of the pain. This often results in insomnia.

If an illness causes a sleep disorder to develop, the sleep disorder is secondary to the illness. Successful treatment of the primary underlying cause will usually diminish the effects of the sleep disorder.

Insomnia - The Most Prevalent Form of Sleep Disorder

Insomnia, a most common sleep disorder, affects about one third of the American population and is classified two different ways. It can be classified by how long it lasts. Transient insomnia lasts for only a few days, short term lasts for a few weeks and chronic lasts for more than three weeks. The other way insomnia is classified is by its source. The main two classifications of this sleep disorder by source are primary and secondary.

Transient insomnia is experienced by most people at some time throughout their lives. It can be caused by stress such as worrying about the first day school or an illness in the family. Sometimes this sleep disorder occurs due to a disruption of their circadian cycle, which is a persons natural sleep cycle, caused by jet lag or a shift change at work. Transient insomnia goes away once the stress issue has passed. Short term insomnia is often caused by similar stressors as transient insomnia. If the sufferer of this sleep disorder cannot break the cycle of poor sleep, it often develops into chronic insomnia.

Primary insomnia develops without any obvious cause. Sometimes it starts as early as infancy. Often it is the result of high metabolic rates or an overactive nervous system.

Secondary insomnia is the direct result of another cause. This sleep disorder can come from illness, medication, drugs or alcohol. Addressing the underlying cause of secondary insomnia often gives the sufferer relief. For example, if arthritis pain keeps you from sleeping, then treating the arthritis is the best way to cope with the sleep disorder.

Insomnia is not a single disorder. It is a general symptom and could have many potential causes. In order to qualify as a sleep disorder, insomnia has to meet three specific requirements. First, the person has to experience poor sleep in general, or have a problem falling or staying asleep. Second, if given the proper sleep environment and an adequate opportunity to sleep, the problem still occurs. Third, the result of the poor sleep causes some type of impairment while awake. Examples of impairment are; fatigue, body aches and pains, inability to concentrate, mood changes, lack of energy, poor concentration, or developing an unnatural amount of worry about sleep.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

Often insomnia is treated with medication, such as sleeping pills. These can be prescription medication or bought over the counter.

However, there are several other methods of treatment for this sleep disorder. Behavioral treatments include meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, visualization, biofeedback, sleep hygiene, cognitive behavioral therapy and reconditioning sleep restriction. These methods are often very successful.

Some sufferers of this sleep disorder choose holistic, or alternative, treatment. This method involves the use of herbal supplements which are not usually FDA approved. Others seek acupuncture as a way to relieve their insomnia. Passive body heating, which is the use of hot baths, is another method used.

Understanding this sleep disorder is the first step to breaking the cycle of insomnia.

Insomnia in popular culture

Insomnia has been a featured disorder from many factors such as books and movies. Two cult classics one is a book titled Insomnia written by horror novelist Stephen King and the other is the Robert DeNiro film from 1976 Taxi Driver. There have been 28 songs written and recorded about insomnia and among the artists who recorded a song were Vanessa Carlton, Green Day, Radiohead, and Tenacious D. The most popular film based on the Chuck Palahniuk novel that was a hit about 6 years ago was Fight Club with Edward Norton and Brad Pitt and the lead character was manic insomniac. This seems to be the most common form of sleeping disorder to the point that movies and songs were made about this problem.

People aren't aware that this is a problematic issue for those who suffer from this. It's not healthy to go without sleep because it can affect your immune system making you prone to catching things like the flu and colds. Not getting any rest can cause severe disorientation because your body wasn't given an opportunity to rest and recuperate.

This is what drove the designer coffee movement up like the sprawl of coffee shops from Starbucks, Gloria Jeans, Seattle's Best, and Caribou Coffee since you had a lot of late nighters consisting of mainly people working in hospitals and college students who had to pull late nighters and cram sessions and needed to stay awake so when coffee wasn't working they bought this over the counter pill called Vivarin which is equal to about 2 cups of coffee when you take the prescribed dosage.

It's usually not a good idea to take Vivarin because it can interfere with your body's ability to sleep and rest normally. You'll find more college students getting sick a lot because they're forcing their bodies to do things that isn't normal like staying up super late and not getting at least 6 hours of sleep. Rest also provides your body's digestive system to rest which makes up about 70% of your immune system so it's ideal to sleep when necessary and taking short naps also work as a re-energizer to give you a burst of energy that works much better than coffee or caffeine pills.

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That can become resistant since a lot of coffee drinkers tend to get very tired after a certain point and that's due in part to the fact that you build up a resistance after having a few cups of coffee or cans of Coke so meaning it won't keep you awake it will accelerate the rate of how fast you'll start to feel sleepy.

So seeing pop culture idolize such a disorder is unknown unless the person who wrote the book or penned the song has a problem with it and decided to write or sing about it. The reason for it is unknown, but it's rather interesting since a song can tell a story and the same of a book, but it's obviously influenced a slew of songs, a few movies and a series of books where the characters are suffering from some kind of sleeping disorder from mild to severe.

Insomnia

When you think of insomnia you're thinking of someone who can't sleep for a reasonable amount of time. A typical complaint from an insomniac is not being able to close their eyes or rest their mind for over a few minutes at a time. There are many reasons for this ranging from anxiety to bipolar disorder. Yet sometimes there's no real causes and can just happen for any given reason, but too much activity and physical pain can be causes for someone not to be sleeping at night.

Finding the underlying causes is key to finding a cure for this problem. It's also been found that not eating has contributed to someone not sleeping. There are 3 types of insomnia and they are transient insomnia which lasts anywhere from a single night to several weeks, acute insomnia is the inability to sleep well for a single period of 3 weeks to up to 6 months, and chronic is deemed the most serious where it's happening nightly for at least a month or longer.

There are options to treat insomnia the most common is medicinal since there's commercials on for Ambien, Ambien CR (Controlled Release) , Rozerem, and Lunesta prescribed for people dealing with sleeping disorders.

It seems in this day and age that sleeping disorders are becoming more common and prevalent because with the new line of sleeping pills coming out explains clearly shows that there is an increase of sleeping disorders of many variations. Some of the medications out there that's used in treatment of insomnia have proven that it was effective in helping insomniacs wake and sleep at the right time, but it lacks the data information to prove the theory as truth and factual. Lunesta and Ambien are noted to having a high psychological dependence than the older brands of sleeping pills and now cognitive behavior therapy is one of the many options widely used in someone dealing with insomnia and using the medication Rozerem because of the likelihood of getting hooked to the drug is reduced and is widely prescribed for people who have a history of overusing their medications.

Some insomniacs have used herbs like chamomile when drunk in tea and lavender for aromatherapy as a means to relax. Insomnia can also result in a deficiency of magnesium and getting the right amount has proven to improve the quality of a person's sleeping patterns.

Pomegranates are also good for insomniacs since there's a nutrient in the fruit key for everything from immunity to cardiovascular health and are good for improving sleep. Insomniacs are also advised to eliminate a lot of the stress and tension in their lives because this is a triggering problem in the everyday life on an insomniac. Chinese medicine has also been introduced into helping those with sleeping disorders and other issues surrounding that. According to statistics taken from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services it's estimated that 60 million Americans suffer from some type of insomnia and is noted to increase with age. 40% of women and 30% of men suffer from this.

Women tend to deal with this more because of increased level of responsibilities in their lives since more and more households in the United States are becoming single run homes and 75% of women are the heads of them which makes them the sole bread winners and taking on the role of mother and father which makes their lives increasingly difficult when they don't have a partner or spouse to give them the support they need.

Jet Lag Syndrome

This is the second most popular sleep disorder and usually affects international flights and if it's domestic if they're going between time zones. This is what you call knocking your body clock out of synch because when you're traveling across different time zones especially at the international level because that can throw you off an entire day if you're coming from the west going east from New York to London or Los Angeles to Tokyo or Sydney which can throw you off since you cross the international date line which is one day ahead and behind.

It seems as if women are more affected than men and according to medical reports it's because the natural hormone estrogen and it's triggered when the body when accustomed to normal daytime and nighttime rhythms therefore you're upsetting the body's natural state of corresponding with a specific time of day and it can even interrupt eating patterns as well. It can take up to several days to even a full week to regain some normalcy on the time and place once you've had time to sleep yourself into adjustment mode.

The symptoms of jet lag vary by the individual person and symptoms can include or be a combination of dehydration which can trigger minor disorientation, and loss of appetite, headaches and sinus irritations, fatigue, grogginess, nausea and/or vomiting from an upset stomach, irritability, and mild depression. Jet lag is not linked to the length of a flight, but the transmeridian distance traveled. For example if you flew from New York and Los Angeles which is approximately 5 hours you will feel some jet lag crossing the Central and Mountain time zones. Jet lag can be extremely difficult in places like Alaska and Russia because of the fact that Alaska only sees a short amount of daylight and Russia has 11 different time zones and can really throw someone off if they were flying from Copenhagen to Tokyo.

Usually people that are prone to this are often given sedatives by their doctors to help them sleep through the flight and to wake up without the effects of jet lag when they land in their destination.

Ways to recover quicker from jet lag is proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep because you'll be surprised to know that people who don't sleep or get enough rest and relaxation will deal with it later when they land and the disorientation sets in. Sunlight according to doctors say can help reset your body's clock back in synch.

It's difficult to pinpoint the severity of jet lag because it affects people differently and usually people who travel on international flights are less likely to deal with jet lag because they're used to the constant change. And have manage to adapt to those changes since some travel monthly for business and usually it's business travelers who deal with jet lag more than those who go for vacations.

Business travelers fly at odd times which can throw someone off because they're flying out super early or catching the red eye somewhere to arrive the next day.

Snoring Cure - 9 Simple Ways To Effectively Cure Snoring

Summary: Do you snore or are you irritated because the person who sleeps next to you snores? Here are some simple cures.

You might find people who snore funny, but you just won't feel the same way when the person you sleep with snores into your ear every night. It in fact will annoy you. This is the driving force behind curing snoring.

The following are some methods to control or if possible cure snoring:

- 1. Respiratory Exercises:** Snoring is mainly caused by blocks in the breathing passage like the nose and throat due to nose blockades, wrongly position jaws or an over-strained throat. To resume normal breathing, take many deep breaths to relax the muscles of your throat
- 2. Decongestants:** Nasal congestion can also cause snoring. Since the nose is blocked, the person may try to breathe through the mouth leading to snoring. To clear these blockades, take decongestants.
- 3. Anti-allergy medications:** Enlargement of adenoids might have been cause by allergy to some drug previously prescribed. Once a person gets over the allergy, snoring stops.
- 4. Healthy diet and exercise:** Most obese people snore. This is not just a coincidence. The concentration of fat in the air passage, limits air from flowing freely in and out. The proper functioning of the diaphragm is also hindered by fat accumulation in the stomach resulting in snoring. 4 in 10 obese people are known to snore. Good exercise and a healthy diet will not alone help them overcome snoring, but will also benefit them in numerous ways.
- 5. Change your bed position:** Sleeping in the wrong position may also induce snoring. For example, you might stretch your neck too much by using too many pillows. Using a single pillow can avoid this. Lying on your back may also cause snoring.

6. Lifestyle change: Intake of alcohol and snoring may directly or indirectly induce snoring. For example, certain medical complications caused by drinking might have caused snoring. To maintain good health, it is therefore advisable to quit alcohol and smoking. This also improves all-round health and mental peace.

7. Medication: Sleeping pills, antihistamines, certain other medicines can cause an increase in snoring.

8. Sleep Pattern: Basically, there are two periods of sleep, the REM sleep and stage 1 sleep. A person dreams constantly in REM sleep and experiences deep sleep often. Stage1 sleep will be experienced while sleeping or if a person sleeps poorly. Both these can lead to unstable breathing which in turn causes snoring. If you don't sleep at around the same time everyday, the irregularity may cause instability in respiration and thus cause unstable breathing when you sleep.

9. Salt water nasal drops: Congestion in the nose may be caused by mucus and this can both spoil your sleep and also cause snoring. If you want to avoid this, purchase a small bottle of salt water nasal drops at any drugstore in your neighborhood. These help flush down the mucus. If you are not willing to buy a bottle, these nasal drops can be made right at home by dissolving a teaspoon of salt in roughly 250 ml of water. Once this water cools to the natural temperature of the body, put a dropper in it and use it.

If any other serious condition like sleep apnea or enlargement of tonsils and/or adenoids, surgical procedures such as Laser Assisted Uvula Palatopathy commonly abbreviated as LAUP and somnoplasty or radio frequency tissue ablation can be undertaken. This is more than sufficient proof that the root cause of snoring must be determined prior to taking action.

Leave Snoring Behind - The Herbal way

Summary: Tried every snoring cure in the market and still snore? Try the "green way" and live a happy snore-free life.

Many new drugs have come out into the mainstream market which claim to reduce drastically if not completely cure snoring. For those few for whom all these medicines have failed, doctors suggest surgery as the drastic last resort.

But what do you do, if you thoroughly dislike medicines and are scared of the knife. Are you doomed to be the laughing stock for snoring for the rest of your life?

This can probably drive you nuts if you were unaware that herbs are very effective in curing snoring. No. This is not a mere sales gimmick. You can stop snoring through herbal cures.

Of the various methods to prevent or completely stop snoring that are out there today, you must agree that natural supplements are much safer than drugs which are normally prescribed.

Please note that natural is not synonymous with without recommendation. There are certain natural substances that can hamper the course of action of other drugs and need to be avoided since they can be intoxicating.

Advice of a medical expert must be sought before administering any of these supplements. Else, conduct researches yourself.

This is more strongly advised if you are already under medication or are allergic to certain things that can be triggered by these supplements.

Much like their artificial counterparts, even herbal drugs must be taken only in carefully prescribed doses.

There are people who have an aversion to taking artificial medicines and believe that natural supplements are the way to go to gracefully treat the human body.

It is because of this that knowledge of natural alternatives to cure snoring is sought after. A large portion of people will prefer it over even medicines that are readily available in the market and have natural ingredients.

Aromapathy is another well-known cure for snoring. This method uses certain oils to relax the airway. The anti-inflammatory action of these oils is taken advantage of here. You may also use these oils through sprays or mouth rinses.

Though this method is simple, it is strongly discouraged for people with asthma or any previous breathing problems. Avoid contact with eyes. Consult a doctor immediately if it accidentally falls into the eyes.

Herbal supplements packaged in the form of tablets are also widely used. These help clearing mucus in the throat and helps relaxing the air pipe. Mucous causes blocking of the insides of the throat which is normally ignored by the person who snores. This produces a contraction of the windpipe which further leads to snoring. These tablets help alleviate these problems.

Hungry for more information on this interesting cure? Search engines can be your friend and guide in this venture. Search for then with apt keywords like "Herbal snoring cure" or "Natural cure for snoring" to find millions of pages on the topic.

A homeopathic professional is best suited to suggest what you can take and what you must avoid.

There are thousands of success stories where people have successfully overcome snoring. Try it yourself and join them.

A word of caution: What may suit others may not suit you. One man's food is another's poison.

Remedies for snoring - Do-it-yourself

Summary: Want cheap but effective cures to snoring. Cook them up yourselves at your own home.

Are you one of those who experience sleepless nights because your partner snores non-stop? Or are you the person who is snoring and wants to get over it, the cost-effective way? Get that odd noise out of your household today. Here are some simple cures for snoring.

To find a cure for snoring, we need to zero down on its cause. Research shows that snoring or stertor as it is medically referred to is caused by air vibration when it is forced through a small gap inside the throat which is stuffed.

Did you wonder why we tend to snore only when we are sleeping? When we sleep, our upper airway muscles relax and they wilt inward. This makes passage of air through the wind pipe tougher and hence apnea (stoppage of breathing of small instants) occurs which leads to snoring.

When apnea occurs, there is an increase in Carbon dioxide levels in the body. In response to this, the heart rate gets affected and our blood vessels get narrowed. Thus the more time for which these muscles relax, the more the people snore.

There are people who do not realize that they are snoring. They toss and turn and wake up tired losing good quality sleep. Some people, when half-awake, even hear themselves snoring. Obesity, smoking, drinking, tonsillitis, sinusitis, common cold may all lead to snoring.

Snoring is closely linked to overweight people. This is because there is fat concentration on the airways that limits the air to go in and out freely. Losing weight will greatly help these people to stop snoring.

Consume healthy food and exercise everyday. Though it may seem unrelated, exercising is found to be very effective in getting rid of snoring. A relaxed jaw can work wonders in reducing snoring.

If you do smoke or drink, reduce their frequency. By minimizing consumption of alcohol during the night, you can overcome snoring and you will also experience a complete improvement in health. Research shows that bad sleeping positions can cause snoring. Lying on your back may cause snoring. So lying on your stomach or to your sides may help you overcome snoring.

Soreness of the upper respiratory tract, Nose blocks and tonsillitis are the chief causes of snoring in young children. Children, and even adults for that matter, tend to breathe with their mouth when their nose is blocked. This as expected leads to snoring. So if you started snoring because of cold, the snoring will also go away when you are rid of cold. That is it. Cure snoring through the above means. Curing it is necessary since it reflects on our mood and our relationship with others.

Though these remedies may cure the woes of most of those who snore, they are not a panacea. They can most certainly reduce snoring, but it may not completely cure it. Medicines or sprays that are get at pharmacies to cure snoring are too at times ineffective. So it is better to take these home-remedies and not have anything to lose.

Snoring - Its Nature, Cause And Cure

Summary: There are many ill effects of snoring. But by identifying the causes, we can cure snoring.

Ever since a pioneer invented a device for curing snoring by attaching a sock with a tennis ball to the back of a shirt to prevent him/her from lying on the back, hundreds of other inventions have been made in the same field. These devices, sadly, initiate a very unpleasant stimulus every time you snore or do anything that can trigger snoring. Snoring is not a voluntary action. So if a device does keep you from snoring, it might also keep you awake all night.

Abnormality of the air passage is the root cause of snoring. When free flow of air which is required for normal breathing is hindered by some problem, it is highly likely that air strikes the back of the nose and mouth continuously. This vibration comes out as snoring.

Many people take snoring lightly imagining that it will not cause any harm. Contrary to this, people who suffer from snoring may in the long run, have serious health problems like obstructive sleep apnea. Apart from this, they cannot get a good night's rest and thus are deprived of complete rest. Also, it may embarrass the person and also disturb his/her spouse/bedmate.

Obstructive sleep apnea is a condition where snoring is interspersed with instants where the person completely stops breathing. These instances may occur for 10 seconds each unto 10 times each hour. Thus the sufferer may have 30 to 300 such episodes in a single night.

These reduce the oxygen levels in our blood and causes the heart to pump harder than normal.

A person is forced to sleep only lightly so that he can keep his muscles taut. Only this can regulate normal flow of air in a person's air pipe. This unrelaxed rest is not sufficient for the human body. This makes him less productive for the entire day and also lead to heart enlargement and heightened blood pressure

The following are some of the contributors to snoring:

Anatomy of the mouth

Tissues in the air passage are some of the factors of snoring. Narrowing of the air passage is itself a chief cause of snoring. Elongated soft palette, thickened soft palette, enlarged tonsils can all cause narrowing of this passage. All these cause obstruction of free air flow.

Drinking just before bedtime:

Most of the effective causes of snoring are those which make the throat muscles relax in excess. Alcohol being a sedative does just this. It acts as a relaxant on the throat muscles. Thus, consumption of alcohol just before sleeping can cause snoring.

Apnea

All too often, snoring and obstructive sleep apnea are found to be interrelated. So for any fitting treatment to be carried out, you must make sure that you are thoroughly diagnosed.

Nasal problems

Various biological factors may also lead to poor air flow through the nose. The nasal bridge or septum as technically referred to is the underlying factor. When there is nasal congestion or when it is out of shape (crooked), there are greater chances of snoring.

There are many different methods to control and cure snoring, but one of the best permanent cures for snoring is surgery.

It is best to detect the cause of snoring very early since it will be easier to cure it. It is not fatal or even very damaging on health but more you procrastinate, the more severe the condition is likely to get.

Snoring - 6 Factors And Their Corresponding Remedies

Summary: Reasons why a person snores are analyzed in depth in this essay. Remedies are also highlighted to help the person live a more peaceful life.

Snoring is the annoying drumming noise that is produced by the throat along with its various components when they vibrate. It does not occur when you are awake. But when you are asleep, these tissues relax and block the normal passage for flow of air. This narrowing of the passage and inhibition of normal air flow causes snoring.

All remedial measures to snoring involve probing the cause of snoring. Only when the cause is known, can any concrete steps be taken to cure it. If not, one has to somehow find out the cause. The following can be the causes.

1. Obesity:

Sedentary life, rich food, junk food and physiological problems cause people to develop all the conditions that could eventually lead to snoring. Obesity is one of these conditions. It is well known that people who are overweight snore more than those who have their muscles toned. The fleshiness of their throat is the chief cause of this. This there is more blockade in their throats. To counter this, the overweight people are often advised to relieve themselves of a few extra pounds. Shedding these extra pounds not alone alleviates them of snoring, but also improves their overall health.

2. Drinking:

Do not consume alcohol just before sleeping. If you do, then your throat muscles will over relax and droop into the airway blocking it. This aggravates snoring.

3. Smoking:

Smoking modifies the cells in the throat among all its other ill effects. The throat generates more mucus to withstand the passage of smoke and nicotine through the air tract so that there will be no inflammation. But the accumulation of mucus itself causes a blockade to air and hence snoring occurs.

4. Sleep pattern:

There are stages of sleep. Stage1 sleep is when a person just begins sleeping. Every time a person is disturbed, he goes back to stage1 sleep. The second stage is Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep where dreams occur

Normally those who snore have a very irregular breathing pattern arising out of the grunts of their bed mates.

One should have good sleeping habits and practice sleeping at around the same time everyday to prevent snoring. Since a body requires 8 hours to rejuvenate, it is recommended that you establish a good sleep pattern.

5. Sleeping habits:

People who sleep on their back snore more than those who sleep in other positions. This is because when you sleep on your back, gravity causes your tongue to withdraw to the back of your throat. Apart from this, the tissues in the throat dangle and this air that passes has to push these muscles up to pass. This causes them to vibrate and cause snoring.

It has been observed that sleeping in an elevated position reduces chances of snoring. At an angle of 30 degrees, the tongue wont roll back and the diaphragm will relax well.

6. Medical Problems:

Peaceful sleep is lost when you have a blockage in the throat. This can be caused by inflammation that arises from allergies or infection. Tonsillitis, large adenoids, accumulation of excess mass in the throat and modification in cell contraction can block the flow of air in the throat. Surgery is commonly advised for snoring that arises of these complications

Medications Used for the Sleep Disorder of Chronic Insomnia

People that suffer from the sleep disorder of chronic insomnia must decide whether or not they are going to take a sleep medication. This decision is usually made with their physician. Many people decide to take a sleeping pill because it offers relief from the symptoms of their sleep disorder and the extreme sleepiness they are always feeling. Taking a pill can improve how they feel and also the quality of their life. However, many people worry about the side effects and health risks that come with taking sleeping pills. Sleeping pills are among the most widely used drugs in the United States, and their use continues to increase.

The types of sleep medications that are available to people with insomnia fall into two categories, prescription and over-the-counter medications. Each sleep medication affects the body differently. The effectiveness of the sleeping pill is a major factor when dealing with sufferers of this sleep disorder. How quickly the pill will take effect and how long the effect will last are very important. The effect should match the individual's sleep problem. The fast acting drugs would benefit a person who has difficulty falling asleep while a longer lasting pill would better benefit someone who has difficulty staying asleep.

Other important factors concerning medications for people with this sleep disorder include the impact the medication has on sleep quality, the tolerance that a person has for the drug, the possibility of developing a dependence on the drug, and the side effects associated with the drug. Each of these points has to be considered when deciding to take sleep medication for chronic insomnia.

Many over-the-counter sleep medications contain some type of antihistamine as a primary active ingredient. Antihistamines are widely used to treat allergies and they are also effective in helping people fall asleep. However, there has been little research done on their long-term effectiveness or safety.

Prescription medications for the sleep disorder of chronic insomnia are classified into four general groups: benzodiazepine receptor agonists, antidepressants, melatonin receptor agonists, and barbiturates. Each one of these drug groups has specific benefits in regards to treating insomnia. However, it is very important that the right type of for chronic insomnia medication is prescribed for each individual person with this sleep disorder.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

Before choosing a sleeping medication, it is very important to determine the source of the insomnia. For example, perhaps the source of the insomnia is the result of another treatable illness, or a side effect of a medication that is taken. The insomnia is then called secondary insomnia. The focus on medication should then be on the primary illness. Often the insomnia will disappear once the underlying cause is treated.

The decision of whether or not to take sleep medication for chronic insomnia has to be a personal decision. There is no right or wrong decision. However, it is important, if the choice is to take a medication for this sleep disorder, to become as educated as possible about the medication prescribed.

Muscle pain and sleeplessness

Fibromyalgia is a painful condition that affects the muscles and joints and is seen in only 3-6% of the general population in the world. It's generally seen more in females than males with a ratio percentage of 9.1 according to the College of Rheumatology and is commonly diagnosed in females between the ages of 20-50 though it's been noted that the onset happens in childhood. This is not a life-threatening disease though the degree of pain in the condition can vary day to day with periods of flare ups and remission. The disease is being argued and viewed as non-progressive, but that's a point that remains in limbo.

This is a problematic issue that can be a reason to keep someone up at night because the pain can be unbearable with the tingling and aching in the muscles. This drives many who deal with this to endless and chronic deprivation of sleep. Those who suffer Fibromyalgia also note issues with memory and other neurological issues, but the most frequent is the issues with sleeping that individuals go through when they deal with painful, annoying flare-ups.

Other issues that surround this problem, which can make sleeping very difficult, are irritable bowel syndrome with constipation, which affects mostly women and few men. Skin disorders like dermatological disorders, headaches, myofacial twitching, and symptomatic hypoglycemia. Stress, excessive physical exertion, lack of sleep, changes in temperature and barometric pressure. This condition can worsen when individuals don't sleep or getting the proper rest and not overdoing on things in their daily lives.

The American Medical Association had officially recognized Fibromyalgia as a medical condition back in 1987 when the disorder was around since the 1800s. It's been said that flare ups are not identical to the ones that are found in people with rheumatoid arthritis, but ibuprofen like Advil, Acenomenofen (Tylenol), and Naproxene (Aleve) which are anti-inflammatory and can bring some comfort to those with Fibromyalgia flare ups. Massage has also been ideal in helping those who deal with Fibromyalgia to find comfort when they have flare ups. Massage helps to transfer fluids from the muscles and joints and increases circulation to the affected areas to bring some temporary relief for inflammation and flare ups.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

Which can actually help improve sleep for someone in pain, but it's best to get a massage when you're not on any medication due to the high risk of side effects that can be triggered from massaging tissue and muscles.

Fibromyalgia is a manageable problem if you follow your doctor's instructions and take your medication as directed and getting the right amount of sleep and getting plenty of exercise and eating a nutritious diet consisting of fresh fruits and vegetables and drinking plenty of water and limiting things in the diet that can also aggravate flare ups. When you take care of yourself properly you can actually improve the quality of sleep as well as decreasing the debilitating pain.

That can keep someone up all night long instead of allowing them to sleep and getting in a decent amount of time for rest and feeling stress free and more relaxed, so that they can face the day with no painful flare ups and discomfort that can be annoying.

Narcolepsy - A Rare Sleep Disorder

Narcolepsy, a relatively rare sleep disorder, causes people to fall asleep when they do not want to. This is caused by a neurological disorder. The brain sends signals to the body that is sleep inducing; however, they are sent at inappropriate and unpredictable times. Often it happens when a person is involved in a quiet activity, such as watching a movie or during a meeting. Sometimes a person with this sleep disorder falls asleep while driving, which is obviously extremely dangerous. Others fall asleep while they are eating or talking. The overwhelming need to sleep can come at any hour of the day during any activity.

People suffering with narcolepsy often do not realize how sleepy they are, nor how often they fall asleep. It is often a family member, friend or coworker that convinces them that they need to seek medical help for their sleep disorder.

Narcolepsy has five main symptoms. These are excessive daytime sleepiness, insomnia and fragmented sleep, sleep paralysis, cataplexy and hypnagogic hallucinations. Some people with this sleep disorder experience only one symptom but others can experience all five.

Excessive daytime sleepiness is generally the first symptom to appear. Everyone with narcolepsy has this symptom. The feeling of needing to sleep is so strong that sufferers are unable to fend it off, regardless of how hard they try. These sleep attacks, as they are usually called, can happen several times and last for five to ten minutes.

Insomnia and fragmented sleep are a very common symptom of this sleep disorder. People with narcolepsy often have a very difficult time falling asleep at night, even though they fall asleep easily throughout the day. When they do fall asleep at night they wake up often and do not follow a typical REM / non REM sleep pattern.

Sleep paralysis occurs in about half of the people that suffer from this sleep disorder. For several minutes before falling to sleep or waking up, the person with this symptom cannot talk or move.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

The loss of muscle function while awake is cataplexy. These episodes are usually very short in length. Over half of the people with narcolepsy experience this symptom of this sleep disorder. They are caused by a part of REM not functioning correctly. Often, episodes are brought on by anger, laughter or any other strong emotion. Sometimes knees buckle, necks and jaws become weak or the person may fall to the ground. Even though the person looks like they are asleep and cannot talk, they are fully awake and aware of what is happening.

A hypnagogic hallucination is experiencing very vivid and often frightening sounds, images or physical sensations. These occur from dreams just before the person is falling asleep or waking up. It is very difficult for a person with this sleep disorder to distinguish between the dream and reality. These hallucinations often have very dangerous themes and are extremely frightening. Often they are accompanied by sleep paralysis.

There are also several lesser symptoms of narcolepsy. These include blurred vision, migraine headaches, memory or concentration problems and automatic behavior. An episode of automatic behavior can last for several minutes. During that time a person with this sleep disorder will perform a routine task. The task is often done incorrectly, such as placing a turkey in the dishwasher or writing past the end of a page.

Narcolepsy can be diagnosed and treated with various drugs. If left untreated this sleep disorder can ruin a person's life.

Narcolepsy: The sleeping disease

There are over 3 million cases of narcolepsy and is estimated by medical reports that 200,000 Americans, but just under 50,000 are actually officially diagnosed by a doctor. It has been said that it's widespread like the neurological disease Parkinson's disorder. This condition is usually recognized in both men and women at any age, yet the symptoms are usually first noticed in teenagers and younger age adults usually in their 20s and early 30s.

It's been noted that there is a 15-year between the onset and actual diagnosis of the problem, which has contributed to the debilitating features of this particular disorder. Those who deal with narcolepsy have a plethora of cognitive, educational, occupational, and psychological issues that can arise from this problem. The presence of narcolepsy is 1 in 2000 people and is also found in people with diagnosed learning disabilities and currently the treatment options are very limited.

The studies that were conducted for this concluded that this problem is constantly under diagnosed in the general population in society. Some narcoleptics don't show any signs visibly and the severity of the condition varies from person to person.

This is where medical science has its blunders because of the fact that this condition is so under diagnosed that it's hard to really get a grasp of the severity of this problem, because it varies in levels from noticeable to barely obvious.

Polysonogram and Multiple Sleep Latency exams are the two tests that are done to give a formal and correct diagnostic approach to the condition and usually this is where the diagnosis presents the level of severity so that it's properly noted by a specialist to ensure a proper treatment plan for that person. Tests are conducted in two-hour increments to allow the person to sleep and usually the polysonogram test does a continuous test of brain activity when it's in REM sleep mode when sleep happens at night.

Usually most narcoleptics fall asleep in nighttime sleep mode fairly quickly. There are several methods of treatments for people with narcolepsy and usually it consists of anti-depressants and planned short-timed naps have also been helpful to lower the dependence on medicinal treatments and allowing the body to do what it should be doing naturally. Retraining the body to sleep at a reasonable time has helped those with narcolepsy to recognize sleeping at night and taking short naps during the day so that their body stays alert because a lot of narcoleptics have been putting themselves and others at risk when they fall asleep during their normal work day or even driving or operating machinery.

With the new wave of holistic medicine being readily available to help people with conditions from skin to psychological issues. Narcoleptics can also work with a treatment plan that includes a change in diet and incorporating exercise and taking nutritional supplements and formulas to give someone added nutrition if they're not getting enough from the food they eat.

Narcolepsy is manageable if you follow the doctor's instructions and taking medications when you're supposed to and following therapy plans that are designed for that person to follow to the last detail.

Nightmares and Night Terrors - A Frightening Sleep Disorder

At some time in their childhood almost all children experience the sleep disorder of having a nightmare. They are common in children and can begin as early as two years old. They are most common in children between three and twelve years old and are considered part of the normal developmental process. However, only about 3 percent, experience night terrors, also called sleep terrors. Both of these sleep disorders can be very frightening to a child.

Nightmares are dreams that are so frightening that they wake the person up. Everyone has had nightmares occasionally throughout their life and they usually are not something to worry about. Nightmares occur several hours after going to sleep during the REM stage of sleep when there is general body paralysis and active dreaming.

A child can remember the nightmare once they awake and they still remember it in the morning. Sometimes this nightmare sleep disorder can become a problem if the child has nightmares very often and becomes afraid to go to sleep or becomes sleep deprived. When a nightmare occurs it is important that the parent remains calm and reassuring.

There are several things that a parent can do to prevent nightmares. Discuss calm and comforting things with your child just before putting them to bed. Reading to them, or telling them a story can also be very comforting. Don't let a child watch violent or scary shows on television, especially just before going to bed. Maintaining a relaxing bedtime routine is also important. Sometimes, nightmares indicate a more severe emotional problem within your child.

Night terrors usually occur during the first few hours of sleep, during deep non-REM sleep. They often occur at the same time each night. Night terrors are characterized by screaming, crying or moaning. It is not unusual for a child experiencing a night terror to sit straight up in bed and scream. Their heart rate is increased and they experience rapid breathing. An episode of this sleep disorder can last from 10 minutes to over an hour. Although the child's eyes are open, they are actually still asleep and when they wake up in the morning there is no memory of what happened during the night.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

Although night terrors can be frightening, they are not dangerous. They usually are not a sign of any type of mental distress. A parent should not try to wake the child, or comfort them, during a night terror. The best thing for a parent to do when their child is experiencing a night terror is to make sure they are safe. Generally, most children outgrow this sleep disorder after a few months or years.

Several of the factors that can contribute to night terrors include being overly tired, staying up extremely late, eating a heavy meal just before going to bed, and taking certain medications.

Although nightmares and night terrors can seem like a very scary type of sleep disorder to both the parents and the children involved, they are generally harmless.

Nocturnal Eating Syndrome - A Food Related Sleep Disorder

Nocturnal eating syndrome is a sleep disorder that is more common in women than men. It is one of two eating disorders that are related to sleep. The other is called sleep-related food disorder. Nocturnal eating syndrome and sleep-related food disorder are parasomnias

Nocturnal eating syndrome is a sleep disorder that is characterized by compulsive raids on the refrigerator at night. Usually people with this sleep disorder are very light sleepers. When they awake during the night they have an overly compulsive feeling that they will not be able to fall back to sleep unless they eat something. Once out of bed and at the refrigerator, the compulsion to eat makes them gobble down food. People with nocturnal eating syndrome are fully awake and remember eating the food the next day. This syndrome is a combination of a sleep disorder and an eating disorder. Insomnia is also a factor in nocturnal eating syndrome. Treatment for this disorder is usually received from a mental health professional that specializes in people with eating disorders. Improving sleep hygiene can also help with this disorder.

Sleep-related eating disorder also affects more women than men and is a variation of sleepwalking. During an episode of this sleep disorder, a person will eat during partial arousal from a deep sleep. Often they will eat very unhealthy or strange foods that they normally would not eat when awake. During an episode of sleep-related eating disorder, a person might eat frozen pizza, raw cookie dough, peanut butter on fish and even dog food. Often they are very careless and sloppy and may get burns or cuts while preparing the food. It is very difficult to wake a person during an episode and they have no memory of it in the morning. There does not seem to be a correlation to hunger during a sleep-related eating disorder episode, even if the person has eaten just before bed, an episode can still occur.

Although the cause of food related sleep disorder is not known, several triggers have been identified. Medications such as lithium, a mood stabilizer, and the benzodiazepine receptor zolpidem are two of those triggers. People with mood and personality disorders or psychological problems such as bulimia are at higher risk of developing one of these food related sleep disorders. People suffering from other sleep disorders including insomnia, sleep apnea, periodic limb movement disorder or narcolepsy are also at higher risk

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

People with sleep-related eating disorder usually have a history of sleepwalking. Because of this, people suffering from this parasomnia are considered having more of a sleep disorder than an eating disorder. Treatment with prescription medication is often very effective.

Antidepressants, dopamine agents, anticonvulsants and opiates are often prescribed. Once sleepwalking is stopped so are the trips to the refrigerator.

Sleep eaters often are overweight because of the high caloric intake at night. The weight gain can lead to other sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea. Seeking treatment, either from a medical or mental health professional is essential for good health in the treatment of sleep eating disorders.

Shift Work Sleep Disorder

Many people that work during the night suffer from Shift Work Sleep Disorder, also known as SWSD. This disorder affects about one quarter of the approximately 20 million people who do shift work. People affected by shift work sleep disorder are employed in many types of jobs. These include large numbers of workers in industries such as transportation, manufacturing, mining, power, health care, and emergency services including police and firefighters and EMTs. Many of these industries operate around the clock and many various shift schedules exist.

Working a shift job forces your body to function outside of its natural circadian rhythm. Their circadian rhythms never become fully adjusted to their hours. No matter how long a person works at night, when they are greeted by the morning sunlight a signal is sent to their brain saying it is time to wake up. A person suffering from this sleep disorder lives in a state of constant circadian disruption.

There are several coping strategies for people with shift work sleep disorder. The most important thing to remember when coping with the challenges of shift work is recognizing the importance of sleep and making it a priority.

Sleeping during the daytime can be very difficult for some people. Besides going against the body's natural circadian rhythm, there are also the sunlight and the everyday life of the rest of the world, most of which is awake. Many people with this sleep disorder move their bedroom to an isolated place in the house and try to make the room as quiet and dark as possible.

It is best to try to avoid as much of the morning sunlight as possible if you plan to go to sleep right after your night shift. Wear sunglasses on the way home and try not to stop for gas or groceries. The more sunlight you are exposed to, the more likely you are going to have a difficult time falling asleep.

Another coping technique is to develop a sleep strategy. It is very important to set a specific time to sleep. Many people that suffer from shift work sleep disorder find it is best to follow the same sleep routine even on the days they are off from work. It is essential that family and

friends know not to bother you during your sleep time unless it is an emergency. Generally, shift workers are chronically sleep deprived. Scheduling naps at specific times can be a great help in dealing with the sleep disorder that accompanies shift work.

People with this sleep disorder should limit the amount of caffeine during the later part of their shift. Some people establish a caffeine cutoff time, after that they drink juice or water.

The use of sleeping pills for shift workers can develop into a dependency on them. Taking sleeping pills on a daily basis can lead to other health problems.

Not everyone is able to tolerate working during the night. The constant battle with this sleep disorder may cause some people to find a different job.

Sleep Apnea - A Sleep Disorder That Can Be Fatal

Sleep Apnea is a serious sleep disorder that can be life threatening and at times fatal. People with sleep apnea often fall asleep normally; however, once asleep their ability to breathe is blocked. Usually this inability to breathe is caused by the muscles in the throat relaxing too much and collapsing into the airway. The body then sends a signal to the brain that breathing has temporarily been blocked. This causes the person to wake up and start breathing again.

The cycle of interrupted breathing can occur many times throughout the night. These episodes can occur up to 50 times an hour and last for ten seconds or longer. Often the person that suffers from this sleep disorder is unaware that anything is happening to them. They can not understand why they always feel tired during the daytime.

The most common form of this sleep disorder is obstructive sleep apnea, known as OSA. Some sufferers of obstructive sleep apnea also suffer from central sleep apnea. This sleep disorder is then called mixed sleep apnea.

It is believed that obstructive sleep apnea affects between 18 - 20% of the adults in the United States. If this sleep disorder is left untreated it can become life threatening and in rare cases fatal. It is the underlying cause of illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, pulmonary hypertension and systemic hypertension.

There are several methods of treatments for sleep apnea, both surgical and noninvasive. The first line of therapy for someone suffering from moderate to severe sleep apnea is called positive airway pressure. Known as PAP, positive airway pressure is a noninvasive form of treatment. A machine delivers a constant flow of air through a mask that is worn while sleeping. The force of the air flow must be determined by a sleep technician during an overnight sleep study. There are three types of positive air pressure therapy, CPAP, BiPAP and AutoPAP.

Dental devices are also used to treat this sleep disorder in mild to moderate cases. Dental devices fall into two general categories: mandibular, or lower jaw, advancing devices or tongue retaining devices. Mandibular devices are used most often. They attach to the upper jaw and pull the lower jaw and base of the tongue forward. This shift in position keeps the airway open.

Medications are generally not a successful form of treatment for most people with sleep apnea. However, many of them do take antidepressants and modafinil.

Supplemental oxygen is often used in conjunction with a PAP machine. Oxygen alone can not prevent the collapse of the airway or sleep fragmentation. However, oxygen can prevent the drop in the level of blood oxygen that occurs when the airway collapses.

There are also surgical treatments for obstructive sleep apnea that may be an option for some sufferers of this sleep disorder. These include uvulopalatopharyngoplasty, somnoplasty, corrective jaw surgery, palatal implants and tracheostomy.

People with this sleep disorder generally find that their quality of life can improve with the proper treatment.

Sleep Apnea: A Weighty Issue

Sleep apnea is the condition for where there are pauses in breathing during sleep. These are defined by medical terminology when an individual literally stops breathing. There are two types of apneas Central and Obstructive. This is a common problem among the morbidly obese which requires them to wear an oxygen mask so they can breathe since that's due in part of their weight bearing down on their chest crushing their rib cage and lungs.

According to medical reports the populations at risk are obese middle-aged males since physiology doesn't make women potential sufferers of sleep apnea. The problem is that people who do fall asleep due to sleep apnea will go through brief periods where people think they're not going to wake up. Keep in mind that this is very serious because if it's not properly diagnosed it can be life threatening. People with excessive weight usually morbidly obese constantly have to deal with frequent episodes of paused breathing. Snoring is a common problem with the morbidly obese and constant gasping for air while sleeping is another problem. Obstructive sleep apnea can be dangerous to the heart because it's prolonging and deprivation of oxygen to keep the circulation flowing efficiently.

Other symptoms that are deemed non-specific are headaches, irritability, moodiness, difficulty concentrating, Nocturia (getting up in the middle of the night to urinate), increased urination, decreased sexual drive, increased heart rate, anxiety, depression, esophageal reflux (acid reflux disease), and profuse heavy sweating at night.

Sleep apnea has also been linked to congestive and congenital heart failure usually found in people who are diagnosed as morbidly obese because of the excessive weight on them. This is from severe and prolonged cases meaning the individual(s) were not being treated and had let the condition get to the point that it's no longer treatable.

Individuals born with Down's Syndrome are likely to develop obstructive sleep apnea since 50% of the population that has this genetic condition are likely to be diagnosed because of having an enlarged head, adenoids, tonsils, tongue, and narrowing of the nasopharynx. Pharyngeal flap surgery has also been noted to cause sleep apnea in patients because of the obstruction in the breathing pattern after surgery which if not monitored can be life threatening. There are different treatments for people with sleep apnea and doctors and ENT (Ear Nose and Throat) specialists

take the following into consideration for designing a treatment plan for those who are diagnosed with this condition.

The factors that are considered are an individual's medical history, severity of the disorder, and the specific cause for the obstruction. Some treatments also incorporate a lifestyle change, avoiding alcohol and medications that can relax the nervous system.

Other lifestyle changes is losing weight and quitting smoking, and incorporate things like elevating themselves while sleeping so that they can breathe using slanted pillows. The weight issue is the biggest lifestyle concern because that causes some people to be confined to beds where they can't move and be active contributing further into a person's weight gain.

Usually if someone who's morbidly obese and loses about 50 pounds within a couple months their condition improves, but it's usually up to a steady support system to get someone on a set routine and healthy eating plan that helps to get their weight down so they can qualify for other treatments to help them maintain weight loss which is either through gastric bypass which has to be strongly enforced since this surgery is irreversible and you have to eat differently and undergo a major lifestyle change. The other option is lap band, which is reversible, but again to maintain the weight loss to improve sleep and breathing patterns comes with monitoring what one eats and exercise to help improve breathing patterns.

Sleep Disorder - A Growing Concern in the United States

In the United States alone, it is estimated that approximately 60 - 80 million people have some form of sleep disorder. This number continues to rise. Several of the reasons for the increasing numbers are the aging of the American population, the change in our lifestyle and the obesity epidemic. Of course there are other factors that can lead to a sleep disorder, such as, stress, shift work, illness or genetics.

There are more than 100 different types of sleep disorders. They range in severity from minor to life threatening. People of any age, from infants to the aged, can be affected by a sleep disorder at any time of their lives.

As sleep disorders increase in the United States, so do the dangers that are associated with them.

Tiredness can lead to slower mental alertness and a slower reaction time. This can be a very dangerous combination. Between 20 - 25% of all serious vehicular accidents involve a tired driver. Many of these drivers suffer from some form of sleep disorder and may not even be aware of it. A large number of accidents that occur at home or at work are also due to people with some type of sleeping problem. Sleep disorder, combined with the cost of the accidents and illnesses it causes, results in the American people and the government spending billions of dollars.

Lack of sleep is directly related to many physical ailments and conditions. People that do not get sufficient sleep generally suffer more from headaches, sore joints and stomach problems. Often a sleep disorder is an underlying cause of heart problems, lung conditions and diabetes. Sleep disorders can also affect the mental well being of people stricken with them. Mood changes, anxiety, eating disorders and depression can result.

Many people still do not think of a sleeping problem as a medical problem. Because of this, many never tell their physician that they are having a problem with sleep. Even if they see their doctor on a regular basis for an illness or condition, they never mention their difficulty sleeping.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

As the American public and medical community become more educated and aware of the symptoms, effects and severity of various sleep disorders, more and more cases are being diagnosed. Sufferers are being treated with medication, oxygen, cpap machines and even surgery. There are better screening methods and diagnostic tests which find sleep disorder problems earlier. Overnight sleep centers no longer resemble a hospital room. They are now designed to look more like a hotel room, to make the patient feel more comfortable. In some cases, due to computerization and miniaturization, equipment can be so small that some testing can even be done at home.

Sleep is not an option or a luxury. It is a basic element of living and of good health. If you think you, your partner or your child may be suffering from a sleep disorder see your physician. A sleep disorder is a medical problem that can be helped.

Sleep Disorder Affecting Shift Workers

This is a fairly common form of sleeping disorder among medical professionals, police officers, and fireman. This is attributed mostly to people who change their work schedules and sleeping times around frequently. You'll find this often in college students when they're changing semesters and quarters when they get new schedules and can sometimes throw sleep patterns off.

Meaning if you were used to getting up early one semester and then you get to sleep late on another it can throw your sleeping patterns off, which can make you feel disoriented and confused which is the main cause for why people get up and retire late, and are late for their jobs and classes because they're not giving themselves enough time to adjust between schedule changes.

This is why when a job or school schedules changes it's ideal to give yourself adequate time to make the adjustment so that it doesn't throw you off physically, so you're able to wake up and retire at a reasonable time so you can make it to work and school on time.

This is why it's not always wise to constantly change your schedule whenever possible because if you do it too much you're going to confuse yourself on whether you're coming or going. There are some people who's jobs switch their schedules around so much that it can throw someone completely out of synch because the hours start to get rather conflicted when they're coming and going and not making time for other things like having a life or maintaining their priorities outside of their job and school.

This also can happen if you're running between more than one job and school because if you're going to a job during the day and then running to another job at night it can throw you off as well. People are advised to give themselves so much time between things in order to make the full transition into the new schedule or time frame so they're not feeling overwhelmed and stressed out since stress can play a huge thing in work related insomnia. The stress comes from having to make so many drastic changes too fast and at one time.

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

This is why people get burned out quickly and dealing with the physical things like indigestion and other things because they're pushing themselves too hard and sometimes forcing themselves to do things that isn't even normal and is considered unhealthy.

College students who are like this tending to gain or lose weight because of the stress they're under to switch from one thing to another and not giving themselves a chance to really adjust fully to a schedule or lifestyle change. Even people who work as nurses and doctors occasionally go through this. Because hours are rather strange, and that can throw off the pattern your body has become custom to when to rise and retire and if you interfere with that, it can make you feel weird which can also affect appetite and mental focus and concentration which most people deal with the disorientation of switching things around too fast.

Sleep Disorder and Teenagers

There is a sleep disorder that affects between seven to ten percent of teenagers called Delayed Sleep Phase Disorder, also known as DNS. Most teenagers outgrow this disorder by the time they reach young adulthood. Less than one percent of adults are believed to have DSP. Often people mistake this sleep disorder for insomnia.

Left on their own, people with delayed sleep phase disorder would stay up until very late, sometimes until 4 or 5 a.m. They like to get up very late in the morning or early afternoon. Often they are referred to as night owls.

Many teenagers like to stay up late and sleep late in the morning. Sometimes this is because they want to socialize at that time of the day. However, it can also be due to the natural delay in the circadian sleep / wake rhythm at their age of development.

Teenagers with this sleep disorder often have a very hard time getting up in the morning for school. Even if they go to sleep at a regular time, such as 11 p.m., they toss and turn for hours like someone with insomnia. The difference is, unlike an insomniac, people with delayed sleep phase disorder have no difficulty staying asleep. They do have a very difficult time getting up early in the morning. Teenagers with this sleep disorder are very tired during the day and may even fall asleep in the classroom. The exact cause of this sleep disorder is not known. It is known for certain that it is a circadian rhythm problem.

Treatment for this sleep disorder is available for people that need to get onto a more traditional sleep / wake schedule. The types of treatment include, bright light, chronotherapy, melatonin and over-the-counter prescribed sleeping pills.

Bright light treatment for delayed sleep phase disorder uses bright light to trick the brain's circadian clock. Exposure to bright light shifts the circadian rhythm if it is administered within a few hours of the body's lowest temperature at night.

Using chronotherapy as a treatment for someone with delayed sleep phase disorder requires a block of time one week long. Each day bedtime is delayed by three hours successively. For example, for someone that falls asleep at 2 a.m. but wants to fall asleep at 11 p.m., their

Secrets Of Peaceful Sleep Unraveled!

bedtime would move to 5 a.m. on the first day. The next day it would move to 8 a.m. and continue this cycle for a week. A teenager suffering with delayed sleep phase disorder would need a week off from school in order to complete this therapy. Once the desired bed time is reached it is very important to keep a consistent wake up time.

There are several treatments involving various drugs that are used to treat delayed sleep phase disorder. Melatonin has been successful in changing the sleep cycle of people with this sleep disorder. Prescription medications such as Ramelteon, and other sleeping pills, have been successful in treating teenagers and adults with delayed sleep phase disorder.

If your teenager has trouble falling asleep and always wants to stay up late, be aware of the possibility that a sleep disorder may be present.

Sleeping Disorders: The History

When we hear about sleeping disorders we're commonly hearing about those who sleepwalk and can't sleep which is known as insomnia, but often we wonder why sleeping disorders are becoming a prominent issue in today's society. Right now according to the website Wikipedia there are a total of 14 different disorders ranging from eye twitching to restless legs. Some of these problems are treatable and even preventable when monitored by a doctor or specialized health professional. Sleeping disorders can be extremely dangerous when they go undiagnosed. Many people who are suffering from this disorder are facing a lot of life threatening problems because having a sleeping disorder can disrupt you from living your normal everyday life.

This can overtake someone if they're spending more time worrying about their condition than getting the correct amount of sleep. The problem with many people who are dealing with a sleeping disorder is that they're not aware of it being a problem until they see it's affecting their job and everyday life. Those who suffer from this can also develop clinical depression because they feel like they're not able to do any of the things they're used to doing if they've been diagnosed with a sleep disorder.

Individuals are given a test called the Polysomnogram which is used to determine and diagnose sleep disorders so specialists and doctors can plan a treatment designed for that individual person since not all treatments are the same. According to Wikipedia they list the common treatment options for sleeping disorders are: behavioral/psychotherapeutic, medications (Rozerem, Ambien, Ambien CR and Lunesta are common prescribed sleeping pills given for those diagnosed with a sleeping disorder), and other somatic treatments that are given. Sometimes people who have disorders such as narcolepsy usually have their brain activity measured to see where they are reaching peak points of sleeping so they can be treated since narcoleptics can't really work on jobs that require them to operate machinery or other things because they have to be alert and awake to know what they're doing.

Many people who are currently diagnosed with a sleeping disorder are usually treated medicinally for whatever time period the doctor prescribes and monitors the person's condition for. Having a sleeping disorder can make people feel like they're not normal and that they're sick

when it's not a sickness and that you can treat the problem through medicine and proper therapy to retrain your body to sleep on a normal scale.

The average person sleeps anywhere between 6-8 hours, but the most anyone sleeps is 10 hours. It's noted that people who sleep more than the regular number of hours tend to throw their bodies off due to the fact that naturally we sleep and awake when the day changes. It's ideal to get the right amount of rest because of the fact that your immune system can stress out when you don't get any kind of rest which can also trigger other medical and health issues from the lack of rest.

This can be a problem with mostly younger people because you find that lifestyles in this day and age trigger the use of drugs, drinking, smoking, and a poor diet consisting of a lot of unhealthy food choices and a lack of exercise and maintaining physical health.

What to Expect at a Sleep Disorder Overnight Sleep Center

If you think you may have a sleep disorder, your primary doctor or a doctor that specializes in sleep disorders may send you to a sleep center for diagnosis. There are a large number of sleep centers located across the United States and their numbers are increasing. Sleep centers in the United States must be accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

When a person goes to a sleep center, it is usually for an overnight stay. Costs involved for most sleep study tests range from one to three thousand dollars and many need to be repeated twice. The first visit to diagnose the sleep disorder and the second to get accurate settings for any PAP machines that may be needed. Health insurance generally pays all or most of the cost of the tests needed to diagnose a sleep disorder.

Once an appointment has been made, many sleep centers send a sleep diary to the patient. The information from the sleep diary is used by the doctors to understand general sleeping patterns.

It is also recommended that no caffeine or alcohol be consumed after 12:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled test.

Generally the patient packs an overnight bag just as if they were going to stay at a hotel overnight. During the sleep study you wear your own nightclothes and you can use a favorite pillow from home. You can bring a book or magazine if you like to read before falling to sleep. Most sleep centers resemble a hotel room and have a television to watch if that is what the patient usually does before going to sleep at home. Once you are relaxed the sleep center technician starts preparation for the equipment needed to record your patterns of sleep.

Diagnosis from a sleep center study is made using polysomnography which records a continual record of your sleep. In order to take a specific reading slightly more than two dozen small thin electrodes are pasted to specific parts of your body. They are placed under your chin, on your scalp, near your eyes and nose, on your finger, chest and legs, and also over the rib muscles and on the abdomen. These electrodes then record various types of readings during the night. Often an audio and video tape is also made to monitor sleep noises and movement.

Once all the equipment is in place the sleep technician leaves you alone to fall asleep. Even with all the equipment it is not uncomfortable. It is easy to move or turn onto your side. Each bedroom in a sleep center also has an automatic intercom so it is easy to call the technician if needed for such things as a bathroom break. When the sleep study is completed, the technician may wake you. Most studies that are used to diagnose a sleep disorder take seven to eight hours.

The readings are collected on a computer file called a polysomnogram and are monitored and analyzed by the sleep technician during the night. The results are then sent for further readings to determine if there is a sleep disorder.

Although a sleep study may not sound comfortable, it is very important to determine and treat any sleep disorder.

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