

What is Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea is a disorder of breathing during sleep. Typically it is accompanied by loud snoring.

Apnea during sleep consists of brief periods throughout the night in which breathing actually stops.

People with sleep apnea do not get enough oxygen during sleep. There are two major types:

1. Obstructive sleep apnea is the most common type and is due to an obstruction in the upper airways during sleep. This can be a result of several factors, including inherent physical characteristics, excess weight and alcohol consumption before sleep. Bed partners notice pauses approximately 10 to 60 seconds between loud snores.
2. Central sleep apnea is caused by a delay in the signal from the brain to breathe. With both obstructive and central sleep apnea, you must wake up briefly to breathe, sometimes hundreds of times during the night. And usually there is no memory of these brief awakenings.

What is Narcolepsy?

Some people, no matter how much they sleep, continue to experience an irresistible need to sleep. People with narcolepsy can fall asleep while at work, talking or driving a car. These sleep attacks can last from 30 seconds to over 30 minutes.

Narcolepsy victims may also experience periods of cataplexy (loss of muscle tone) ranging from a slight buckling at the knees to a complete rag doll limpness throughout the body.

Narcolepsy is a chronic disorder affecting the brain where regulation of sleep and wakefulness take place. It can be thought of as an intrusion of dreaming sleep (REM) into the waking state.

The prevalence of narcolepsy has been calculated at about 0.03% of the general population. Its onset can occur at any time throughout life, but its peak onset is during the teen years. Narcolepsy has been found to be mostly hereditary, although there are some environmental factors contributing to its cause.

What is Restless Leg Syndrome?

Restless legs syndrome (RLS) is a discomfort in the legs which is relieved by moving or stimulating the legs. The feeling is difficult to describe and commonly referred to as a crawling, tingling or prickling sensation. Medications have been found useful in controlling RLS.

What are Nocturnal Seizures?

Nocturnal seizures are an uncommon manifestation of a seizure disorder, and not much is understood about them. Sleep deprivation usually induces seizures, so an EEG while sleep-deprived makes it easier to see where the problem area is in the brain.

Other Sleep Disorders

There are hundreds of sleep disorders. Some of the more common of these other sleep disorders include:

- Snoring
- Bruxism (teeth grinding)
- Fibromyalgia
- Sleepwalking
- Sleep Tremors
- REM behavior disorder
- Nocturnal eating
- Insomnia
- Hypersonmia (excessive daytime sleepiness)