



Mental Health Association of Northern Kentucky

A LEADER IN PROVIDING ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE MENTAL WELLNESS

EDUCATION AND SCREENING OUTREACH PARTNER FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
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Common Problems & Sleep Disorders

Many disorders can stop you from sleeping well. Some are relatively trivial while others are more serious. What's important is that most of them can be treated and, even if the disorder itself cannot be cured, your sleep can be improved. Below are some of the most common problems. If you are experiencing any of them, talk to your doctor.

Anxiety & Stress : Anxiety and stress are among the most common causes of sleeplessness. Sometimes it is possible to remove the cause of the anxiety or stress. Do not try to "take on the world." Learn to prioritize your life, separate your work from your leisure, and make time for yourself. If this does not work, there are other ways to cope with anxiety and stress and with the sleep loss they may cause. Your doctor will be able to give you more information.

Depression : Clinical depression is more than just feeling "blue," though a depressed mood is an important symptom. Other symptoms include irritability, loss of interest, loss of zest, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, guilt, low energy, weight changes and sleep disturbances. Depression is another common cause of sleeplessness and, again, it can be treated. If you think you may be depressed, see your doctor without delay.

Snoring : Snoring happens when floppy tissue in the back of your throat gets in the way of the air going in or out. Snoring is more common in older adults, but should not be ignored just because it is common. Regular snoring may also be a sign of sleep apnea, which can be a serious condition. Snoring is a very treatable condition, so if it keeps you or your partner awake, talk to your doctor.

Sleep Apnea : Sleep apnea is a condition where your breathing is temporarily interrupted while you sleep. A common sign of sleep apnea is snoring followed by a period of silence, which ends with a loud gasp as you start to breathe again. You may be unaware that this is happening, but your sleep partner will be able to tell you. Sleep apnea will not only interfere with your sleep, but may also be associated with serious lung and heart problems.

Pain : Almost any pain can keep you awake. Most of the conditions that cause pain can be treated and regardless of the cause, almost any pain can be controlled. If pain is keeping you awake, your doctor can help.

Prostate Problems : If you are a man, you may develop signs of prostate enlargement as you grow older. One of the first signs of an enlarged prostate is the need to urinate more often, especially at night. Frequent trips to the bathroom are very disruptive to sleep. Fortunately, an enlarged prostate can be treated, both medically and surgically.

Nasal Congestion : Temporary nasal congestion is a common cause of sleeplessness. But some people suffer from chronic nasal obstruction and this is often worse when they are lying down at night. Chronic nasal congestion can often be treated with medications, and if these do not work, several surgical options exist.

Teeth Grinding : Teeth grinding can interfere with your sleep, but often you will only be aware that it is happening because your sleep partner tells you so, or because you wake up with pain in your jaws. If you think you are a teeth grinder, talk to your dentist.

Sleepwalking : Sleepwalking can be a sign of a significant psychological problem and should never be ignored.

Sleep talking : Many people talk in their sleep occasionally, but if it happens frequently, or goes on for many minutes at a time, ask your doctor for advice.

Nightmares : Everyone has nightmares from time to time. But frequent and terrifying nightmares that often interfere with your sleep can also be a sign of an underlying medical or psychological problem that might need treatment.

Falling Out Of Bed : People fall out of bed for many reasons, some of them trivial and others more serious. Regardless of the cause, you can injure yourself in the fall. Do not ignore a fall out of bed. Consult your doctor, especially if it happens more than once.

Muscle Cramps : If you frequently wake up with muscle cramps, especially in your legs, it may be a sign that you have a problem with your circulation. This is often due to a hardening of your arteries as you age. There are other possible medical causes of muscle cramping, most of which are treatable, so, again, tell your doctor about it.

Restless Leg Syndrome : This is a condition that causes your legs to twitch or jump spasmodically while you sleep. Although it is not a serious condition itself, it can interfere with the quality of your sleep. Again, your partner may be the best person to tell you if this is happening.

Night Sweats : If you often wake at night because you are drenched in sweat, it might be a sign that you are suffering from a hormonal disorder. If you are a woman, it could be one of the signs of menopause. However, frequent night sweats can also be a sign of diseases such as diabetes, thyroid problems or other medical conditions, so they should not be ignored.