



## SLEEP-WAKE DISORDERS

### What it is:

Sleep-wake disorders encompass 10 disorders or disorder groups: narcolepsy, insomnia disorder, breathing-related sleep disorders, hyper-somnolence disorder, circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorders, restless legs syndrome, rapid eye movement (REM) sleep behaviour disorder, and substance/medication-induced sleep disorder. Although the specific symptoms of these disorders may vary, individuals with these disorders typically complain about the quality, timing and amount of sleep they get on a nightly basis. The daytime distress and impairment caused by lack of quality sleep are core features shared by all of the disorders.

Sleep disorders are often accompanied by depression, anxiety, and mental changes. Persistent sleep disturbances are an established risk for the development of mental illness and substance abuse problems.

### Common symptoms of sleep disorders in general:

1. Difficulty falling asleep at night or getting back to sleep after waking during the night
2. Waking up frequently during the night
3. The need for substances such as sleeping pills, a nightcap, or supplements in order to get to sleep
4. Sleepiness and low energy during the day
5. Loud, chronic snoring
6. Frequent pauses in breathing during sleep
7. Gaspings, snorting, or choking during sleep
8. Feeling exhausted after waking and sleepy during the day, regardless of how many hours of sleep you had
9. Seeing or hearing things when you're drowsy or starting to dream before you're fully asleep
10. Dreaming right away after going to sleep or having intense dreams
11. Feeling paralyzed and unable to move when waking up or dozing off
12. Repetitive cramping or jerking of the legs during sleep
13. Uncomfortable sensations deep within the legs, accompanied by a strong urge to move them



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### **Causes:**

Different sleep disorders can be caused by different factors. Anxiety, depression and other mental disorders may all lead to sleep disturbance and disorders. Psychological stress, alcohol and substance abuse may also be risk factors for the development of a sleep disorder. Genetics can play a role, as having a close relative with a sleep disorder may put an individual at increased risk. Physical medical conditions affecting breathing may also lead to the development of certain sleep disorders.

**Remember to always consult a mental health or medical practitioner regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.**

This factsheet is based on information obtained from the DSM-5:  
American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.*