

# SLEEP

## News and Views

Information about sleep, sleep disorders and how to get a better night's sleep.

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## Sleep and Other Medical Conditions

### Hypertension

People with sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) have an increased risk of developing high blood pressure (hypertension). The risk may be related to SDB severity; the more severe the SDB, the greater the risk of developing hypertension.

During healthy sleep, blood pressure normally falls. This is called the “dipping phenomenon”. When someone has SDB, they lose this blood pressure “dip” at night. They tend to have higher blood pressure readings both at night and also during the day. Some patients with sleep apnea may not be sleepy at all and their only sign of OSA is having high blood pressure.

**SDB is present in more than 30% of patients with hypertension, and in around 80% of patients with medication resistant hypertension.** For this group of patients in particular, treatment with positive airway pressure therapy or another treatment method such as an oral appliance may be especially important.



“Sleep is an underlying cause of many conditions.”

### Diabetes

Sleep apnea is common among patients with type 2 diabetes. It is independently associated with insulin resistance, glucose intolerance and metabolic syndrome, and when untreated, can lead to poor overall treatment outcomes.

However, despite the number of type 2 diabetes patients with SDB, it largely goes undiagnosed.

Because patients with sleep apnea and patients with diabetes share similar comorbidities, screening both ways is recommended: If you have sleep apnea ask if you should be screened for diabetes. If you have diabetes ask if you should be screened for sleep apnea.

### Stroke

Stroke can cause SDB or can be seen in people who have pre-existing SDB. Having a stroke can sometimes change your breathing patterns at night and can cause central sleep apnea or obstructive sleep apnea. Stroke patients with SDB have been shown to have worse functional outcomes. For this reason, if you have had a stroke or TIA, your physician may screen or test for sleep apnea.

People with SDB may be predisposed to stroke for a number of reasons, in particular:

- Frequent drops in blood oxygen levels (intermittent hypoxia) caused by SDB has been shown to be associated with systemic inflammation.
- Sleep fragmentation from SDB may be associated with an increased sympathetic response (fight-or-flight)

Sleep-disordered breathing and sleep apnea have been linked to several medical conditions. In addition to Hypertension, Diabetes and Stroke, sleep-disordered breathing has also been linked to poor mental health including anxiety and depression. If you have any of these medical conditions, talk to your doctor about your quality of sleep and if you snore.

## Is it time for a Sleep Evaluation?

According to the National Institutes of Health, 50 to 70 million Americans are affected by chronic sleep disorders and intermittent sleep problems that can significantly diminish health, alertness, and safety.

Untreated sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, heart disease, stroke, depression, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. Sleep problems can take many forms and can involve too little sleep, too much sleep, or inadequate quality of sleep.

Most people know when to seek medical help for physical discomfort such as pain or a fever, however, sleep problems are often overlooked or ignored.

The majority of people with sleep disorders are undiagnosed and untreated.

To determine whether a sleep evaluation is indicated, consider the following questions:

1. Do you regularly have difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep?
2. Do you snore? Has anyone told you that you have pauses in breathing or gasp while sleeping?
3. Are your legs active at night? Do you feel tingling, creeping, itching, pulling, or aching in your legs?
4. Are you so tired when you wake up in the morning that you can not function normally during the day?
5. Does sleepiness and fatigue persist for more than 2-3 weeks?

If the answer is “yes” to any of these questions, consider a complete sleep evaluation.



Mark your calendars for **Student Sleep Health Week, September 12th-18th**

This new awareness week, which started in 2020, is meant to educate parents and teens on impacts of poor or deficient sleep and raise awareness of all the positive impacts of sleep in teens. The AASM mentions healthy sleep helps students:

- Excel in the classroom by maximizing attention, memory and learning abilities
- Perform better in sports by being faster, stronger and more accurate
- Feel their best and have a more optimistic attitude toward life
- Look their best and maintain a healthy weight
- Have fun and enjoy life by making better decisions and staying safe

<https://sleepeducation.org/student-sleep-health-week-setting-students-success/>

1. **CREATE A MEDIA-FREE ZONE & KEEP THE BEDROOM QUIET:** Turn off cell phones, tablets, laptops, and video games 30-60 minutes prior to bed. *Phones should not be charging in the bedrooms— that small amount of light is disruptive.*
2. **RECOMMEND A HOT SOAK BEFORE BED:** Keep the room cool. Sleep occurs faster when the body cools down.
3. **CONSIDER ROOM DARKENING SHADES:** Keep the door shut, turn the clock facing away from the bed, and consider a lightweight comfortable sleep mask that prevents light entry.
4. **BRING LIGHT IN WHEN AWAKENING:** Open the shades or turn on the lights once awake. The early light of the day helps reset the brain to push bedtime to an earlier hour.
5. **“CHILL OUT” BEFORE BEDTIME:** Consider yoga or meditation to help ease stress. Going to bed worried decreases the quality of sleep so consider relaxation techniques.
6. **IF THEY’RE SICK, PUT THEM TO BED:** Make sure teens are in bed early when ill. Not only is it the fastest way to recover, but also helps teens better prepare for the next day of school.
7. **CONSIDER HIGH-CARB SNACKS BEFORE BED:** Some dietitians recommend snacks such as pretzels, cereal, graham crackers, fresh fruit, dried fruit, popcorn, or toast with jam or jelly before bed.
8. **CONSIDER A NIGHT SCENT:** Aromatherapy such as orange blossom, chamomile, or lavender scents may be soothing and promote sleep.
9. **NO CAFFEINE BEFORE BEDTIME:** Sometimes teens forget that caffeine can be hidden in their favorite sodas and snacks. If they’re craving something hot to drink, recommend a warm cup of herbal tea.

### OTHER ISSUES KEEPING YOUR TEEN AWAKE?

If you’ve tried almost everything listed, then it’s worth exploring what the underlying causes are and follow up with a qualified healthcare provider.