

SNOOZE NEWS!

Are Night Time Microarousals Stealing Your Energy?

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, especially if you have high blood pressure and are 15lbs overweight, speak with your doctor about a sleep diagnostic test.

- Doze off during the day at inappropriate times
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Are irritable and/or have mood swings
- Experience morning headaches
- Have been told you snore
- Choke or gasp for breath while asleep

Obstructive Sleep Apnea can cause hundreds of breathing stops and starts each night, typically paired with snoring resulting in microarousals. These arousals prevent a person from experiencing the deepest and most restful phase of sleep—REM phase.

Continued from front

explore other underlying problems, depression, anxiety, reflux, bladder problems or pain. These other issues are treatable with the right attention from your physician.

Sleep Apnea is also a serious sleep disorder that many women face. It is estimated that seven million women have sleep apnea and are unaware of their problem. Researchers have found that 47% of menopausal women and 21% of pre-menopausal women suffer from sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is characterized by loud snoring, interrupted breathing during sleep and excessive daytime sleepiness. Untreated sleep apnea can lead to cardiac diseases including hypertension, high blood pressure and other medical complications.

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) is a neurological movement disorder that affects as many as 12 million people. A person with this disorder may have a need to move their limbs to alleviate unpleasant sensations described as creeping, crawling, tingling or pulling in their legs and arms. This constant

movement disrupts a person's sleep, leaving them feeling like they are un-rested in the morning. Although the exact cause of RLS is not known, recent research indicates that iron or foliate deficiency may be a risk factor.

80% of people with RLS also have Periodic Limb Movement Disorder which is an involuntary leg twitching or jerking movements during sleep that can occur every 20-30 seconds. Although these are bothersome, they can be treated.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

Many sleep problems can be corrected through changing your sleep habits, reducing stress and improving your diet. If your sleep problems persist, you should see the help of a medical professional. Your doctor will help you determine the cause of your sleep problems.

Additional information can be found at www.sleepfoundation.org

Source: The NSF's *Women & Sleep* brochure and the Sleep Disorders overview from the National Women's Health Resource Center on-line at www.healthywomen.org

Tips to Help Improve Sleep (continued from page 1)



6. Avoid food and drinks high in sugar (including honey, syrup, caffeine (coffee, cola, tea, chocolate), and alcohol before bedtime. Caffeine and alcohol disturb sleep. Caffeine can also contribute to pre-menstrual bloating.
7. Avoid nicotine, it may make it difficult to fall asleep and can lead to fragmented sleep. Smoking can also put you at risk for cancer and heart disease.
8. Avoid large meals and limit fluid intake before bed. Try a health snack so you are not too full or too hungry.
9. Make sure that your bedroom is dark, cool and quiet and that your pillows, sleep surface and coverings provide you with comfort.

These tips are from the National Sleep Foundations, *Sleep Medicine Alert, Insomnia Series Vol., 9.7, 2005 Management of Sleep problems in Women, By Meir H. Kryger, M.D*

PLEASE NOTE: The information in this news update should not be construed as providing specific medical advice, but rather to offer readers information to better understand sleep apnea and related sleep topics. It is not intended to provide an alternative to professional treatment or to replace the services of a physician. For more information on sleep apnea, go to www.sleepervices.net



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Tips to Help Improve Sleep for All Women During the Menstrual Cycle

1. Establish a regular bed and wake time.
2. Use and restrict your time in bed for sleep and sex only.
3. Maintain a relaxing and non-arousing ritual at bedtime. Avoid vigorous, brain alerting and stress producing activities. Activities such as reading, listening to soothing music or taking a bath or shower can ease the transition from wake to sleep.
4. If you have caregiver duties during the night (eg, children, elderly parents, pets) share these duties and get help where possible.
5. Exercise regularly, but finish your workout at least three hours before bedtime. Exercise may relieve some PMS symptoms and increase the amount of deep sleep.

Continued on back.

Insomnia and Other Sleep Disorders Effect Women More than Men.

As our bodies age, we experience a multitude of biological changes that affect our sleep patterns. Women often overlook their own sleep issues due to the demands placed on them by their families, their jobs and society. Feeling tired for many women is just part of their everyday existence, however, constant tiredness and fatigue can be part of an underlying medical condition.

Biological factors, such as your monthly cycle, pregnancy and menopause may affect your sleep. The changes in estrogen and progesterone levels experienced each month and over a lifetime can have an impact on the quality of your sleep. Understanding and responding to the effects of these hormones, and other lifestyle factors can help you maintain restful sleep.

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP DISORDERS

Do You Wake Up Feeling Tired? You're Not Alone. In 1998 the National Sleep Foundation conducted a study on 1,012 women between the ages of 30 and 60 to better understand impact of insufficient sleep. The study found that 25% report daytime sleepiness, 27% had difficulty performing their jobs, 24% had difficulty maintaining family responsibilities and 14% reported falling asleep at the wheel while driving. In a more recent poll, *Sleep in America*, also conducted by the NSF, in 2002, revealed that women are more likely than men to have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep.

The dangers of too little sleep result in more auto accidents, problems concentrating at work and at home, weight gain and an increased risk of serious health problems. Unfortunately, women and their physicians often overlook the questions concerning the of quality of sleep, leading to untreated and under diagnosed problems.

TYPES OF SLEEP DISORDERS

Women Complain of Insomnia 1.5 Times More Than Men. Women, because of changing biological states during their menstrual cycle, pregnancy and menopause, experience variations in their sleep throughout their lives. Insomnia is characterized as the inability to fall asleep or stay asleep, or waking too early or not feeling rested and refreshed from sleep. Insomnia can last one night or up to several weeks. In some patients, insomnia can be chronic and last for years.

Treatment to relieve symptoms of insomnia include lifestyle and dietary changes. Exercising in the morning has shown, in one study, to help post-menopausal women fall asleep and stay asleep, compared to those who exercised in the evening.

Consuming little or no caffeine or alcohol has also shown to improve sleep. As well as making sure your sleeping environment promote sleep (dark room, no noises, comfortable temperature setting, etc).

If these lifestyle changes do not help and insomnia persists, a doctor may prescribe a sleep-promoting medication. You may also need to

