

Why Are You So Tired?



If you're chronically tired, you've probably tried to solve your sleep troubles on your own. But what if your exhaustion is a symptom of something more serious?

Conditions That Can Cause Fatigue

If you have **obstructive sleep apnea**, your airway gets blocked while you sleep, and you stop breathing. This causes you to gasp for air and wake up. These episodes may happen so quickly that you're unaware of them. Over the course of a night, these episodes can significantly reduce how much quality sleep you're getting.

Risk factors for obstructive sleep apnea include being male, over age 40 or overweight or having a large neck or nasal obstruction.

If you are having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, you may have **insomnia**. Primary insomnia is a problem of its own, not caused by any other health condition.

Secondary insomnia is caused by something else, such as a psychological issue, poor sleep hygiene, illness, drug side effects, chronic pain, restless legs syndrome or sleep apnea.

Those who have **circadian rhythm disorder** have different sleep and wake patterns than most people. Generally, the body's internal clock determines when we are awake and when we sleep, and it is set by light and dark.

This disorder can be caused by the effects of shift work, and it also can be linked to pregnancy, certain medications and other health conditions.

Narcolepsy can cause you to fall asleep at any point of the day, making it a dangerous disorder. It is most often caused by a dysfunction in the brain, but there are treatments available.

How to Get Help

Regularly getting a good night's sleep is important to your overall health. If you're commonly excessively tired, it's important to discuss your symptoms with your doctor, who may recommend a sleep study to get more information about what may be causing your fatigue.

Sources: American Sleep Association, WebMD®



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