



# Milwaukee School of Engineering Counseling Services Newsletter

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## Sleeping Disorders and Healthy Sleep Hygiene

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### Over 100 million Americans are sleep deprived... Are you one of them?

- Are you finding that you to fight to stay awake during the day?
- Do you awaken frequently at night?
- Do you feel sleepy during the day, even if you sleep the whole night through?
- Do you spend more than nine hours in bed, but still feel like you haven't gotten enough sleep?
- Do you take frequent naps?
- Are you constantly tired and fatigued?
- Do you fall asleep at strange times, such as during meetings, in class, or at the movies?
- Do you find it harder to focus on your work and maintain concentration?

### The Basics:

Sleep is a basic necessity of life, just like air, food, and water. Individuals vary on the exact amount, but typically, young adults require between 7.5 and 9 hours of sleep per 24-hour period. Trying to balance college coursework, jobs, extracurricular and social activities, and relationships with family and significant others is challenging at best. Often, sleep is the first to be sacrificed in order to meet the constant and endless demands placed on the time and energy of the contemporary college student. Unfortunately, cutting back on sleep can lead to deleterious consequences.

Cutting sleep short – even by 1-2 hours a night – leads to sleep deprivation. When we don't get enough sleep, every part of our life suffers including school work, jobs, relationships, and our mental and physical health. Sleep deprivation leads to poor performance, irritability, difficulty getting along with others, and risk for injury and poor health. It has been implicated as the cause in a growing number of vehicular fatalities. Here are some **quick facts and statistics** regarding sleep deprivation:

- In general, adults require 7.5 – 9 hours of sleep per day
- 32% of American adults sleep as little as 6 hours a night across the workweek
- People who are sleep deprived function at only a 20% efficiency level
- At least 56,000 motor vehicle crashes are caused by drowsy drivers every year, resulting in more than 40,000 injuries and 1,544 fatalities
- Sleepiness behind the wheel now kills more young adults in traffic accidents than does alcohol

## Why Sleep Is So Important:

Sleep is regulated by two brain processes: the first one is the restorative process which occurs naturally in response to how long we have been awake; the second is the drive to sleep, which is a process that controls the timing of sleepiness and wakefulness that we experience in a daily basis.

## Tips for Healthy Sleep Hygiene:

- **Sleep Schedule:** Follow the same sleep schedule every night. Go to sleep and wake up at the same time each day – even on the weekends. Keeping a regular sleep schedule is the best way to maintain the body's natural sleep cycle.
- **Routine:** Establish a bedtime routine, such as taking a warm shower or relaxing in a hot tub.
- **Environment:** Create a sleep conducive environment that is quiet, dark, cool, and comfortable.
- **Bedroom Activities:** Avoid reading, watching TV, or using laptop computers while in bed, because it can inhibit sleep.
- **Noise:** If you are easily awakened by noise (*this is for those living in the residents halls*) invest in a pair of earplugs (you'll get used to them), or run a fan or humidifier to drown out the noise. If the phone rings in your bedroom, turn off the ringer.
- **Restlessness:** If you can't get to sleep for over 30 minutes, get out of bed and do something boring, and in dim light, until you are sleepy.
- **Caffeine:** Limit caffeine to less than three cups a day (e.g. coffee, tea, soda, and chocolate). Avoid caffeine and other stimulants after 3:00 PM.
- **Alcohol:** Although it may help you to *get* to sleep (alcohol is a depressant after all) alcoholic beverages will disrupt your sleep's normal restorative process and cause you to wake up throughout the night.
- **Medications:** Sleep aids are very addictive and people build a tolerance to their effects very quickly. Do not take over-the-counter sleep medications without first consulting your physician.
- **Exercise:** Exercise regularly, preferably in the morning. If you do exercise in the evening, complete your workout 3 hours before bedtime.

## Sleep Disorders:

Sleep disorders are classified into two categories:

- **Dyssomnias** are disturbances in the amount, timing, and quality of sleep.
- **Parasomnias** are abnormal or distressing events that occur during sleep or at the threshold between sleep and wakefulness.

### *Dyssomnias include the following disorders:*

- **Narcolepsy:** a disorder characterized by excessive daytime sleepiness and periods of muscle weakness called cataplexy. People with narcolepsy also suffer from sleep attacks, which are short, uncontrollable episodes of sleep during the day.
- **Sleep Apnea:** sleep apnea means "cessation of breath." It is characterized by repetitive episodes of upper airway obstruction that occur during sleep, usually associated with a reduction in blood oxygen saturation. Symptoms include excessive daytime sleepiness and frequent episodes of obstructed breathing during sleep (usually one's bed partner is extremely aware of this).
- **Kleine Levin Syndrome:** a rare disorder that usually occurs in adolescent males. KLS causes excessive sleep or *hypersomnolence*, compulsive eating, and hypersexuality. Although it typically occurs in teenagers, this disorder may continue into adulthood. Because the syndrome is rare, and very few cases have been studied, the cause isn't known. Very little is known about KLS except that it does exist.

### *Parasomnias include the following disorders:*

- **Somnambulism:** somnambulism (sleepwalking) refers to everything from sitting up in bed to getting up and performing detailed tasks. The sleeper does these things as though in a trance. It's relatively harmless provided the walker is protected from harmful situations like upper story windows, bunk beds and stairs. Sleepwalkers are unresponsive when spoken to, difficult to awaken, and retain no memory of the incident.
- **Somniloquy:** somniloquy (sleep talking) refers to any utterance made during sleep, from one word to entire sentences. It can be brought on by stress or some illness. It is relatively harmless although disturbing to roommates.
- **Bruxism:** bruxism, or gnawing or gnashing the teeth, is a habit that is very irritating to those who share your sleeping space, and it also causes a lot of damage to your teeth. It can have far-reaching implications, like loosening and loss of teeth. It can also cause another condition - temporomandibular joint disease (TMJ). TMJ occurs when the muscles, joints and ligaments of the jaw move out of alignment. Symptoms of this are headache, earache and pain in the face, neck or shoulder. The International Classification of Sleep Disorders (ICSD) suggests that bruxism is the third most common form of sleep disorder right behind sleep talking and snoring.
- **Snoring:** snoring disrupts your sleep and the sleep of anyone who is in the same room. Snoring may also be a warning that the sleeper is a victim of sleep apnea. Symptoms include dry mouth, sore throat, morning headaches, morning grogginess, and sometimes daytime sleepiness. Causes include obesity, fleshy or deformed uvula (the small fleshy

protrusion dangling downward visibly at the back of the mouth attached to the rear of the soft palate), enlarged tonsils and/or adenoids, blockage of nasal passages, alcohol and some drugs, and sleeping on your back.

This list of sleeping disorders is not comprehensive. For more information on these or other sleep disturbances, contact your physician, or MSOE Health Services (414) 277-7333, or MSOE Counseling Services (414) 277-7590.

## Links for More Information Related to Sleep Hygiene:

- 24-Hour Sleep Need Across Your Lifespan: <http://www.prescriptionforsleep.com/html/sleepinfo/pyramid.html>
- 12 Steps to Better Sleep: <http://www.prescriptionforsleep.com/html/sleepinfo/12steps.html>
- Women and Sleep: <http://www.prescriptionforsleep.com/html/sleepinfo/women.html>
- Driving on the Edge -- A Mobile Society on Too Little Sleep: <http://www.prescriptionforsleep.com/html/sleepinfo/driving.html>
- Tips for Healthy Sleep: <http://www.sleepnet.com/tips.html>
- Sleep Disorders: <http://www.sleepnet.com/disorder.htm>
- Sleep Deprivation: Causes and Consequences: <http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000701-d000800/d000705/d000705.html>
- Sleep Deprivation as Bad as Alcohol Impairment: <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/HEALTH/09/20/sleep.deprivation>
- Articles on Sleep Disorders: <http://sleepdisorders.about.com>
- Medline Plus Health Topics – Sleep and Health: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sleepdisorders.html>
- Sleep Foundation: <http://www.sleepfoundation.org>
- American Insomnia Association: <http://www.americaninsomniaassociation.org>
- Sleep Apnea: <http://www.sleepapnea.org>
- Narcolepsy Network: <http://www.narcolepsynetwork.org>
- Restless Leg Syndrome: <http://www.rls.org>

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***MSOE Counseling Services is located on the Second Floor of the Kern Center (K-230). To Schedule an appointment with a Counselor, call (414) 277-7590. For more information, visit Counseling Services at: [www.msoe.edu/st\\_life/couns](http://www.msoe.edu/st_life/couns)***