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Waking up in the middle of the night

Author: Aneesa Das, MD Health and Wellness Sleep July 11, 2018 Do you always wake up in the middle of the night or much earlier than you wanted? This common problem is insomnia, but there are several types of insomnia that can affect sleep differently. Here are some reasons why this might happen, and ways to make it stop: Why our sleep pattern models might happen mostly depends on our circadian rhythm and homeostatic sleep unit (the body mechanism that regulates sleep/wake rhythms). Throughout the night, our sleep cycles between rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and non-REM sleep. Each stage of sleep has a different threshold for how easy it is to be woken up. A likely explanation for waking up at the same time each night is that you go to bed at the same time and then, at the same time every night, you get to an easy stage of sleep and wake up. We are also more likely to remember waking up if it is closer to the time when we normally wake up for the day. Anxiety or Depression Stress can make it hard to get to bed in the first place (which is called sleep-onset insomnia). But anxiety can also cause you to wake up in the middle of the night and have trouble getting back to sleep (called middle insomnia, or sleep maintenance insomnia). Terminal insomnia, which happens when you wake up before the ideal wake-up time and simply can't fall asleep again, can be a sign of depression. Your stomach experiencing acid reflux or just being too hungry or too full can lead to waking up at night. Hormones and blood glucose levels Often waking up in the night could signal that hormone or blood glucose levels are fluctuating. If you have diabetes, talk to your doctor to make sure your blood sugar is properly controlled throughout the night. Other common medical causes Your awakening might be signaling something else entirely, which is why it is important to check with your doctor if this happens too often. Sleep apnea, menopause or thyroid dysfunction are among other medical causes for waking up at night. Is that normal? Most of us wake up at least once a night, but should be able to return to bed with little effort. If you wake up for prolonged periods of at least three nights a week, and continue for at least three months and lead to you being unable to function properly during the day, then this is called chronic insomnia. Having chronic insomnia is different from just being a short sleep – some people are able to function well and rested after regularly sleeping six or fewer hours each night. If your awakening takes place at least three nights a week for at least three months and leads to daytime disturbances, talk to your doctor. It helps to keep a diary about these awakenings and you feel when you wake up. Try to answer some of these questions: Have you had a Are you too hot or too cold? Do you have hot flushes or heart palpitations? Are you hungry or have you eaten too much? Did you take a nap early or did you change your sleep routine? can I prevent these awakenings from happening? Apart from keeping a diary and talking to your doctor about your concerns, it is important to practice good sleep hygiene. Try these sleep hygiene tips: Keep a regular sleep schedule and sleep relaxation routine. Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening, and avoid alcohol just before bedtime. Avoid nicotine and certain medications, such as benzodiazepines, which can cause withdrawal symptoms during sleep and lead to awakening. Stay active during the day to build your sleep drive and increase your chances of sleeping throughout the night. Avoid spending too much time in bed; most people need only seven to nine hours of sleep, and the bed should be limited to sleep and romance. If something bothers you, write it down and schedule your time for the day. Some people find that talking to a counselor or practicing relaxation techniques, would be mindfulness, can help achieve a better sleep. can I prevent these awakenings from happening? Should you use sleep aids? There are many options on the market for sleep aids, including melatonin, the body hormone that regulates the internal clock. Taken as a drug, melatonin can promote more sleep. The American Academy of Sleep recommends sleep aids only in connection with behavioral changes to treat chronic insomnia. Is your sleep frequently disrupted? Sleep experts in Ohio state can help you It's frustrating when one minute you sleep and the next you stare at the alarm clock awake in the middle of the night. While it's not always obvious why you're on the surface of a sleep, there are certain things that increase the likelihood that you'll have waking up mid-sleep (apart from noisy neighbors or a self-blaring alarm). Learn the common culprits that disturb your sleep and fall asleep again after waking up in the middle of the night. Your skin is itchy and irritated Do you have eczema? The state of irritating skin can endanger your sleep. This disease can have a serious impact on patients' quality of life and general health, both physically and mentally, says Jonathan Silverberg, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Dermatology and Medical Social Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. He notes that eczema can bring changes in the immune system and inflammatory responses that prevent sleep. In addition, it is common for eczema itching patients to get worse in the evening, making them unable to fall asleep well or causing them to wake up often. If the your ability to sleep well may be affecting, it is a good idea to discuss treatment options with your doctor. According to According to The National Sleep Foundation, about one in 10 Americans has Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS), a sleep-related movement disorder that is best known for its overwhelming and often unpleasant urges to move legs while at rest. RLS symptoms tend to be the most prominent in the evening, waking you up regularly and interfering with sleep quality. A 2016 study published in Reactionweekly suggests a possible link between common allergy drugs and elevated RLS symptoms. Patients with restless leg syndrome already have sleep difficulties as their symptoms tend to worsen at night or with rest, but sedating antihistamines, such as Benadryl, can intensify symptoms, says neurologist William Ondo, MD, director of the Clinic of Circulation Disorders at Houston Methodist Hospital in Houston. A doctor can evaluate any medications you are taking or test for vitamin deficiencies that could be making RLS symptoms worse. Room temperature and a good night's sleep are inextricably linked. Your body needs a bath in body temperature to cue the onset of sleep; a room too warm can make you struggle or fall asleep, or wake up in the middle of the night. The National Sleep Foundation recommends sleeping in a cool room with about 65 degrees. Their experts argue that this temperature is usually conducive to a restful night. However, they also suggest experimenting: Various settings affect people differently, so find a temperature on the cold side that is best for you. Your mattress is firm (very firm) It is a common myth that a firmer and better sleep mattress goes hand in hand. Mattresses that are too firm create high pressure points in the hips and shoulders and a weak support in the lower back, which leads to throwing and rotating to release these pressure points and thus a hectic night of sleep. Do not select the mattress based on the long-term notion that the firmer is better. Most people wait far too long to replace their mattress; if you're in the market for a new one, take your time to do research and find a level of firmness that feels really comfortable. Get stores and companies on their offer to test the mattress in your home for a while; if you find out you're not sleeping well, keep playing Goldilocks. You have sleep apnea (but you might not even know) If you often wake up throughout the night, you may have these symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea. This condition usually involves loud snoring, often coupled with moments of sporadic pauses of breath during sleep. This occurs when the muscles in the back of the neck relax to the point of not being able to get a proper breath back in. Your brain rises to this breathing problem and, in an attempt to properly open the airways, wakes you from sleep. What results are often a strong snoring or during this episode of reawaking. This happens so often that you end up experiencing many waking moments instead of the solid night time you need. Talk to your doctor if you suspect you have obstructive sleep apnea or if your bedmate insists on doing it! Distinctive symptom: excessive daytime drowsiness. You can be referred to a sleep specialist who can perform blood-oxygen tests while you sleep or please do a home sleep test to monitor things like breathing patterns, oxygen levels, and heart rate. You're stressing out the high time stress is a major contributor to insomnia (no surprise!). If you are constantly worrying, whether it's about work, finances, upcoming choices, or an upcoming vacation (yes, happy occasions can also cause stress), chances are you're experiencing your side of waking up in the middle of the night. To reduce stress, try to squeeze in the exercise more regularly-even a 10 minute walk during lunch or after dinner can help. An analysis of studies published in 2017 in Advances in Preventive Medicine found that exercise improves sleep quality or duration. Continuing to go to the bathroom The need to pee in the middle of the night can certainly be part of the reason you don't sleep too much. But having to use the bathroom every night could be the result of more than drinking a lot of water before bed. It could also be a masked symptom of diabetes mellitus or a urinary tract infection. A 2019 study published in the journal Sleep found that drinking alcohol within four hours of bedtime can sabotage sleep. Here's why: Alcohol consumption can shorten the time it takes to fall asleep, but the amount of sleep time is disrupted. The sleep cycle begins in sleep non-fast eye movement and then goes in a short period of rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. By drinking alcohol, you will spend more time in a deep sleep rather than in REM sleep. All of this can be negatively affected if you don't get tired of it. You've had too much time on the screen Sleep schedule could be seriously messed up if you want to scroll through the phone just before bed. This is because smartphones, such as laptops, tablets and TVs, emit blue light, a type of light that the brain interprets as daylight. Blue light actually suppresses melatonin, a hormone that affects circadian rhythm and should increase when you prepare for bedtime. (Here's what experts say about whether blue-blocking light glasses work.) Your brain feels stimulated. This is okay if you look at your smartphone screen at noon, but if you look at the screen at midnight, your brain will be confused and think the sun is off - making it even harder to fall asleep. It's It's to get a poor sleep and feel exhausted and uncomfortable the next day. Identifying the reason or reasons why you are not sleeping well may be the first step in helping you catch some much needed and much deserved z. If a sleep disorder is the underlying cause of poor quality sleep problems, a sleep study may be necessary to diagnose and treat sleep disorder. If you live in the state of Alaska and think a sleep disorder would be sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, or narcolepsy is keeping you from getting the quality sleep we all need, schedule a call for a free consultation with Alaska Sleep Clinic @ 907-770-9104. 907-770-9104.