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Published on *Explorable.com* (<https://explorable.com>)

[Home](#) > Other Sleep Disorders

## Other Sleep Disorders

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Sleep disorders are many, and varied in nature. Having a better understanding of all of them, can not only help you with your issue but also provide you with a solid baseline knowledge, in case you ever need to help a loved one.

Now that we've covered the most frequent sleep disorder (insomnia), its counterpart (hypersomnia) and discussed a bit about one of the most intriguing sleep problems (constant nightmares), let's have a quick overview of some of the other disorders that affect sleep in different ways.

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## Sleep Apnea

Perhaps you remember that this condition was mentioned, when we discussed the polysomnography test. It's worth talking about sleep apnea in more detail because it's a condition where providing treatment is very important. It's a disorder in which a person stops breathing, for short periods of time, during sleep.

It's more common in adult males, and the most noticeable symptoms are snoring heavily, as well as feeling tired during the day. If you ever wake up gasping for breath during the night, have been told that you snore too loudly, and have become more irritable, you need to pay a visit to a physician. Your doctor can conduct the appropriate tests to either rule out sleep apnea or provide the appropriate treatment.

## **Narcolepsy**

This disorder is similar to hypersomnia. People who struggle with it may feel extremely drowsy during most days, and may fall asleep at inappropriate places and times. Simply put, you can imagine narcolepsy as having "sleep attacks", where you suddenly fall asleep, and that can lead to dangerous situations.

Narcolepsy is the result of a neurological disorder and is therefore usually treated as such. Clear signs of narcolepsy are falling asleep in unsuitable settings (school, work, driving, or any activity that involves physical effort) despite trying your absolute best not to fall asleep and getting plenty of sleep during the night.

## **Sleepwalking and Sleep Talking**

Somnambulism refers to episodes in which a sleeping person appears to be awake, and either walks, talks, or performs an automatic task (folding clothes, organizing items). These episodes are similar to night terrors; both are heavily triggered by acute emotional distress and both appear mostly in children. The person who has them has little to no memory of performing such acts but still feel fatigued the next day.

## **Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS)**

An uncomfortable, or even painful sensation in the legs, which is relieved by movement, or the uncontrollable and intense urge to move the legs. What is particular about this syndrome, is that it becomes activated as the individual attempts to relax and fall asleep.

RLS causes difficulties falling asleep, as well as waking up during the night. As a result, people may feel fatigued during the day and suffer from cognitive impairment in the long run, if the syndrome is not treated.

## **Bruxism**

If you (unconsciously) clench and grind your teeth while sleeping, you'll wake up with tension aches, difficulty opening your mouth in the morning, and eventually, a damaged jaw and teeth. Bruxism is considered a sleep-related movement disorder and while getting good sleep habits will help, you still need to pay a visit to the dentist to make sure there's nothing more that needs to be corrected.

## **Your Sleep Disorder**

Although there are other sleep disorders as well, we've touched upon the most common and varied ones, to paint a picture of the basics. At this point, you might have matched your symptoms to one of the sleep problems we've mentioned.

Still, it would be best to consult with your physician before proceeding with treatment, since sometimes we tend to see ourselves in what we read, even though there may be more nuances to the situation. A doctor would help provide you with a more objective view.

Now it's time to see the factors that can interfere, both positively and negatively, with your sleep.

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