

Drugs, Alcohol, and Sleep

Sleep problems have been associated with drug use, drug abuse, and withdrawal from drugs. Sleep disturbances also have been linked to the use of alcohol and to alcoholism.

Drugs and Sleep

Many prescription and nonprescription drugs can cause sleep problems. The severity of sleep problems caused by a medication will vary from person to person.

Prescription drugs that may cause sleep problems include:

- Blood pressure medications
- Hormones such as oral contraceptives
- Steroids, including prednisone
- Respiratory inhaled medications
- Diet pills
- ADD and ADHD drugs
- Some antidepressants

Nonprescription drugs that can cause sleep problems include:

- Pseudoephedrine, including the brand Sudafed
- Drugs with caffeine, including the brands Anacin, Excedrin, and No-Doz, as well as some cough and cold medications
- Illegal drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines, and methamphetamines
- Nicotine, which can disrupt sleep and reduce total sleep time; smokers report more daytime sleepiness than do nonsmokers, especially in younger age groups.

Alcohol and Sleep

Alcohol often is thought of as a sedative or calming drug. However, while alcohol may induce sleep, the quality of sleep is often fragmented during the second half of the sleep period, when the alcohol's relaxing effect wears off. As a result, alcohol-induced sleep prevents you from getting the deep sleep you need, because alcohol keeps you in the lighter stages of sleep.

SOURCE: The National Sleep Foundation.
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