

When Your Partner Has a Sleep Disorder

Does your mate toss and turn? Then you're probably not sleeping well, either.

Lost sleep can take a toll on how you feel during the day and also on your relationship. Those are good reasons to start taking action, so you both have restful nights.

The first step is to figure out why your partner isn't sleeping well. Has he already tried doing the most obvious things, such as:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, allowing for 7 to 8 hours of sleep.
- Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, restful, and comfortable.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine.
- Take time to relax before going to bed.

If sleep problems still keep happening, it may be time to see a doctor.

Snoring, for instance, is common and often harmless. But it can be due to obstructive sleep apnea, which causes people to stop breathing briefly during sleep.

Likewise, insomnia often happens for simple reasons, like stress or jet lag. But it can also be a symptom of another medical condition, such as heart disease or depression.

Get a Good Night's Sleep

Simple lifestyle changes can make a difference with many sleep disorders, including insomnia, restless legs syndrome, and sleep apnea.

- Exercise daily for at least 20 minutes. Try to finish up at least 4 to 5 hours before you go to bed. It leads to better sleep.
- Eat dinner several hours before you and your partner go to bed.
- Switch to decaf drinks and skip alcohol.
- Don't smoke. Nicotine is a stimulant.
- Make your bedroom better. Save it for sleep and sex. You'll both sleep better if you keep your room cool and dark overnight.

Does Your Partner Snore?

You can help quiet the noise. Since many people snore the most when they lay on their backs, gently nudge your partner to roll onto his side and prop a pillow behind him.

Handy with a needle and thread? You could try another fix. Sew a small pocket of cloth onto the back of a pajama top or T-shirt. Put a small ping pong ball in the pocket, and sew it shut. Because the ball won't be comfortable, your partner will want to sleep on their side, which usually means less snoring.

Has a doctor prescribed a CPAP (continuous positive air pressure) machine? Encourage your mate to use it. If the CPAP machine's noise keeps you up, consider moving the base unit somewhere else in the room. You can also use a white noise machine or wear earplugs.

WebMD Medical Reference

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Reviewed by Jennifer Robinson, MD on October 22, 2014

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