

CAUSES OF POOR SLEEP

So what causes poor sleep? There are many reasons why people find it hard to get to sleep. Stress and worry about finances, family or work are all very common reasons. Noise from neighbours, barking dogs, city living or even a snoring partner can keep us awake. The room may be too hot or cold. The bed might be too soft or too hard. Staying up too late, eating late, drinking alcohol or smoking can all affect our ability to get a good night's sleep. Anything we do in the evening that over stimulates our nervous systems has the potential to disrupt our sleep patterns and cause poor sleep.

Some sleep disorders are physical. Some people have involuntary arm or leg movements. Others suffer from sleep apnoea which is a blockage of the throat that restricts breathing. People who suffer from it typically snore loudly, but strangely don't notice that they have woken up many times during the night as they struggle for air to breathe. Not surprisingly, they often feel exhausted in the morning despite the fact that they think they have been asleep all night! If you think you may have sleep apnoea, you should see your medical practitioner as they may be able to help.

Oversleeping can be just as harmful as insufficient sleep. Oversleeping is certainly not as common as lack of sleep, and has not received so much attention in the press and media, yet it is still one of the important causes of poor sleep. Many of us are unaware that oversleeping can be harmful. The fact is that oversleeping has been linked to a wide range of problems including diabetes, depression, headaches, memory problems and anxiety.

Oversleeping can be due to a medical disorder called hypersomnia. About 5% of the population suffer from this condition, yet it's under-reported because those who suffer from it often think that it's normal to feel sleepy and take naps throughout the day. Of course, it's important to distinguish between simply feeling tired from time to time, and the effects of chronic oversleeping.