

# Illnesses That Can Cause a Sleep Disorder

Many times a sleep disorder can be caused from an illness or from the medications used to treat an illness. Some of the common health conditions that can cause a sleeping problem are cardiovascular disease, endocrine disorders, neurological disorders, respiratory disease, mental illness, gastroesophageal reflux disease, kidney disease, and arthritis.

Cardiovascular disease includes congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease. These are the two most common heart problems that affect sleep and can cause a sleep disorder. Congestive heart failure occurs when the heart can no longer pump enough blood for the body's needs. Blood backs up in the veins of the heart which lead to the kidneys and edema eventually damages the lungs and other organs. People suffering from congestive heart failure have a very high risk of developing the sleep disorder of obstructive sleep apnea. Coronary heart disease is the build up of fatty deposits in the arteries that supply blood to the heart, called atherosclerosis. This condition also can lead to obstructive sleep apnea.

Sleep disorders can occur from endocrine disorders such as diabetes and thyroid disease. Diabetes is a disease that affects the way the body processes and uses carbohydrates, fats and proteins. People that have uncontrolled diabetes often develop the sleep disorder of restless leg syndrome. Thyroid hormones regulate the body's energy levels. Hyperthyroidism can make it difficult to fall asleep, and cause night sweats the person to wake.

Neurological disorders include Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, and strokes. Parkinson's

disease is a central nervous system disorder. This disease causes problems with body motion, including tremors, unstable posture, slowed body movements, muscle stiffness, and difficulty walking. Sleep disorders that occur with this disease include REM sleep behavior disorder and sleep onset insomnia. Alzheimer's disease impairs the brain's intellectual functions and is the most common cause of dementia. This disease causes sleep fragmentation. Epilepsy causes recurrent, sudden, brief changes in the normal electrical activity of the brain. People with this condition are twice as likely to suffer from the sleep disorder insomnia. People that suffer a stroke usually also have obstructive sleep apnea.

People that have respiratory diseases, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, usually also have a sleep disorder. Asthma is a chronic lung condition that makes breathing difficult when air passages become inflamed and narrow. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, known as COPD, refers to a group of disorders that damage the lungs and make breathing difficult. Many people with these conditions suffer from insomnia and sleep fragmentation.

Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and seasonal affective disorder can also lead to a sleep disorder. People with these mental health disorders often suffer from sleep fragmentation and insomnia.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, known as GERD, causes the stomach's juices to flow backwards into the esophagus. This causes the sleep disorder of sleep fragmentation.

Kidney disease causes the kidneys to lose their ability to filter the proper amount of waste products from the blood and regulate the body's balance of salt and water. This can cause the sleep disorders of restless leg syndrome and insomnia to develop.

People with arthritis often find it difficult to fall asleep because of the pain. This often results in insomnia.

If an illness causes a sleep disorder to develop, the sleep disorder is secondary to the illness. Successful treatment of the primary underlying cause will usually diminish the effects of the sleep disorder.