

Parasomnia; How it is Diagnosed and Treated

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OPINION

A parasomnia is a sleep condition characterised by strange and unpleasant physical events or feelings that keep you awake at night. A parasomnia can happen before, during, or after waking up from sleep. You may have strange movements, talk, express feelings, or do weird things if you have parasomnia. Even if your bed companion thinks you're awake, you're actually sleeping.

PARASOMNIAS CAN BE CAUSED BY A VARIETY OF FACTORS

Parasomnias have two types of causes: those that interrupt sleep and those that are related to overall health.

Sleep disturbances include:

1. The shift from being awake to the stages of sleep is not complete.
2. Sleep deprivation and irregular sleep-wake cycles (jet lag or shift work).
3. Medications used to treat insomnia (benzodiazepines: zolpidem), depression (amitriptyline, bupropion, paroxetine, mirtazapine), psychotic disorders (quetiapine, olanzapine), high blood pressure (propranolol, metoprolol), seizures (topiramate), asthma/allergy (montelukast), infections (montelukast) (fluoroquinolones).
4. Restless leg syndrome, obstructive sleep apnea, pain, narcolepsy, sleep deprivation, circadian rhythm abnormalities, or periodic limb movement disorder are all medical conditions that impair sleep.
5. The sleep-wake cycle isn't mature enough (in children with parasomnias).

Other health concerns include:

- Fever.
- Stress.
- Abuse of alcohol or other drugs.
- A concussion.

- Menstruation or pregnancy.
- Genetics. You're more likely to develop parasomnias if you have a family history of them.
- Inflammatory conditions like encephalitis.
- Psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Parkinson's disease, Lewy body dementia, stroke, multiple system atrophy, multiple sclerosis, brain tumours, migraines, and spinocerebellar ataxia type three are all neurological diseases.

PARASOMNIAS SYMPTOMS

Each sort of parasomnia has its own set of characteristics and triggers. However, the following are some of the more common symptoms:

- Inability to sleep through the night.
- Feeling bewildered or puzzled when you wake up.
- Feeling fatigued throughout the day.
- Discovering cuts and bruises on your body for which you have no recollection.

You're making gestures, expressions, vocalisations, or actions that you don't remember, according to your bed companion.

PARASOMNIAS DIAGNOSED

Your sleep medicine professional will inquire about your sleep symptoms with you and your sleeping partner. You'll also be quizzed on your medical history, family history, alcohol consumption, and any substance abuse issues. You'll be questioned about any medications you're taking right now. It's possible that you'll be requested to keep a sleep journal, and that your bed partner may be required to keep account of your sleep occurrences as well.

Other tests for sleep problems include:

Sleep study (polysomnogram): This is a sleeping lab where you will be observed while sleeping. As you sleep, your brain waves, heart rate, eye movements, and breathing will be recorded. Your actions

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Received: November 12, 2021; Accepted: December 02, 2021; Published: December 11, 2021

Citation: Zahra A (2021) Parasomnia; How it is Diagnosed and Treated. J Sleep Disord Ther 10:349. doi: 10.35248/2167-0277.21.10.349

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and conduct will be captured on video. While certain sleep studies can be done at home, if parasomnia is a problem, an in-lab study will be needed.

Video electroencephogram (EEG) or sleep EEG: During a brain event, these tests allow your healthcare professional to see and record your brain activity.

PARASOMNIAS TREATED

The first step in treatment is to identify and treat any underlying sleep difficulties or health conditions, as well as to review any drugs that may be causing the parasomnia.

The following are some general management options for both non-REM and REM sleep disorders:

1. Practice good sleep hygiene (get 7-9 hours of sleep every night; turn off lights, TVs, and electronic gadgets; maintain a cool room temperature; avoid caffeine and vigorous exercise near bedtime).
2. Stick to a regular sleep-wake cycle. Maintain a regular bedtime and wake-up schedule.
3. Use alcohol and recreational drugs in moderation or not at all.
4. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions for taking all prescribed drugs.