

# NOT SLEEPING ENOUGH?

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### Do Not Forget These Other Great Resources:

Healthwise® Handbook, the 24-Hour Nurse Line, Nurse Online Chat, Audio Health Information Library® and you can go online to [www.express-health.com](http://www.express-health.com) for links to reliable health information.

### Challenge:

If you are having trouble sleeping, think about what the obvious and maybe not so obvious reasons could be. Talk with your doctor about possible solutions.

### Sources:

<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/features/important-sleep-habits>

<http://www.prevention.com/health/sleep-energy/5-signs-youre-sleep-deprived>

<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/features/6-surprising-sleep-wreckers?page=3>

<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/thumbnails/0,,20306729,00.html>

**EXPRESShealth**  
A PROGRAM OF SPECTRUM HEALTH SYSTEMS

8200 Haverstick Road, Suite 150  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46240

MAIN: 317.573.7600

FAX: 317.573.7667

TOLL-FREE: 888.573.1568

[www.express-health.com](http://www.express-health.com)

[www.spectrumhs.com](http://www.spectrumhs.com)



After a typical night's sleep, you may not feel restored and refreshed and may actually feel sleepy. This is often due to sleep deprivation. Whether it is a chronic issue or more intermittent, our bodies may suffer short-term and long-term health consequences. There are many causes of sleep deprivation and it is important to identify what is impacting your quality (or quantity) of sleep so that changes can be made.

### ARE YOU SLEEP DEPRIVED?

- Simple decisions stump you or maybe you are making risky decisions.
- You are still hungry even after eating all day and you are craving unhealthy foods to boot.
- You keep coming down with colds.
- You cry more easily and feel glum.
- You have become clumsier than normal.

If these characteristics sound familiar, chances are your body is sleep deprived. Remember, sleep debt is not something you can pay off over the weekend; it can take weeks of building up restorative sleep.

### EFFECTS OF CHRONIC SLEEP DEPRIVATION:

**Short Term:** Decreased performance and alertness, memory and cognitive (ability to think and process information) impairment, stress, poor quality of life, occupational injury and automobile injury.

**Long Term:** High blood pressure, heart attack, heart failure, stroke, obesity, depression, ADD, mental impairment, fetal and childhood growth retardation, injury from accidents, disruption of bed partner's sleep quality and poor quality of life.

### WHAT IS WRECKING YOUR SLEEP?

- **Pets in the bed.** Animals do not have the same sleep cycles that we do. When they wake up to stretch, scratch or walk around, those subtle noises can wake you up.
- **Alcohol and night caps.** Alcohol affects the rhythm of sleep and may make you drowsy at first, but later on in the night it will wake you up. Stop drinking two to three hours before bed.
- **Undiagnosed GERD or other medical illnesses.** Once lying down, stomach acid can back up into the esophagus and cause heartburn and pain. Try sleep propped up on pillows to cope. Asthma, heart failure, lung disease and Parkinson's all count insomnia as a frequent side effect.
- **Medicine, vitamins and supplements.** Steroids for asthma, beta-blockers for blood pressure and narcotics for pain can disturb sleep. Some supplements and vitamins can also cause sleep loss. Ask your doctor if anything you are taking may interfere with sleep.
- **Pain.** Pain signals sent out by your body can fragment sleep. Headaches, back pain, arthritis, fibromyalgia and menstrual pain can be particularly severe causes of sleep loss.
- **Mental illness.** Insomnia is both a symptom and a cause of depression and anxiety. It is hard to know which starts first, but stressful situations often lead to insomnia.
- **Snoring.** Snoring can be a symptom of sleep apnea, which may wake a person up many times throughout the night. Sleep apnea is a disorder where a person stops breathing repeatedly during sleep.
- **Hormonal changes.** Menopause, menstruation and pregnancy are primary sources of hormone related sleep problems.
- **Being exhausted (not sleepy!).** Being exhausted does not make you sleep better. Your body may be too revved up to sleep just as though you ran a marathon. Take the time to unwind from the day by spending some time quietly sitting first.