



## **Sleep Disorders**

Almost everyone has experienced sleep problems at some point in time, but for some people these problems become chronic and debilitating. Sleep disorders profoundly disturb both day and nighttime behavior. Some people spend the night wide awake or are unable to stay asleep. Others, even after a good nights rest, find themselves drowsy all day. Irregularities in the biological clock, emotional problems, hormonal disturbances, and caffeine, alcohol and nicotine consumption can all disturb sleep.

Sleep restores the body and mind. Lack of sleep can impair an individual's physical health, family life, emotional well-being, and productivity. Sleep difficulties affect the body's defenses by weakening the immune system, straining the organs, and by making people more susceptible to illness. Daytime fatigue, poor concentration, headaches, joint pain, and depression can all result from a sleep problem.

### **Types of Sleep Disorders**

Insomnia: Trouble falling asleep or repeated awakenings during the night

Hypersomnia: Excessive sleepiness

Nocturnal Myoclonus: Involuntary leg movements that cause one to repeatedly awaken

Narcolepsy: Experience overpowering attacks of sleepiness

Sleep Apnea: Loud snoring with daytime drowsiness

### **How to Get a Good Night's Sleep**

The way you live every waking moment – your thoughts, habits, the way you interact with others – affects your ability to sleep. The best strategy for sleeping well is to live well. Although many types of sleep disorders require professional assistance, there are some steps you can take on your own:

- Keep a sleep chart – document and record your sleep disturbances so that you can better understand the lifestyle factors that may be affecting your ability to sleep
- Discontinue sleep-disrupting drugs – do not use caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, nasal decongestants or any other stimulants that act on the nervous system
- Get up at the same early hour each day
- Cut out naps
- Keep regular mealtimes – shift the majority of food intake toward the morning rather than the evening
- Have a regular, predictable evening routine
- Start an exercise program
- Rid yourself of nighttime annoyances – shed excess weight to ease back pain, snoring and hernia pain, and do not drink any liquids in the evening to eliminate the need to urinate.

### **Professional Treatment for Sleep Disorders**

Sleep disorders can affect anyone. Fortunately, relief is available. The more you know about the causes and symptoms of sleep disorders, the closer you are to obtaining effective treatment and sleeping normally once again. Reaching out for information and assistance can make the difference. If you think you, or someone you know, may be struggling with a sleep disorder, Pathway Clinic can help. If you would like more information or would like to make an appointment, please call 608-643-3663.