# Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and can't move — here's why

# Think snoring is normal? Why sleep apnea shouldn't be ignored

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People who snore may think that their partners or roommates are the ones most affected by their nightly symphonies — after all, they're the ones who are kept awake while the noisemaker remains, for the most part, blissfully unaware.

But snoring can be more than just an annoyance to anyone else in the room; it can be a symptom of a serious health condition, and has been linked to dangers like heart disease.

Middle-of-the-night wheezing, snorting and snuffling can happen for a variety of reasons, but they all have to do with obstruction of a person's airways.

Nations Tid-Bits

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What is sleep paralysis?

Factors like lack of sleep, sleep disturbances, jet lag, and shift work can increase someone's likelihood

I wake up but can't move, except for my eyes. These symptom stem from a strange sleep phenomenon called sleep paralysis. While various social and psychological factors can influence the prevalence of sleep paralysis, a 2011 paper combined 35 studies with more than 36,000 participants total. The authors found that 7.6% of the general population experiences sleep paralysis, rising to 28.3% in high-risk groups, like students who have a disrupted sleep pattern. And in people with mental disorders, like anxiety and depression, 31.9% experienced episodes. One of the first in-depth studies on sleep paralysis in 1999 defines the three main categories of sleep paralysis hallucinations as the "incubus," the "intruder" and "unusual bodily experiences."

In the first case, people feel an intense pressure on their chests, inducing the feeling that they can't breathe. While sleep paralysis can be hereditary, it can happen to anyone. Factors like lack of sleep, sleep disturbances, jet lag, and shift work can increase someone's likelihood of experiencing it, and certain groups, like African-Africans, can also experience it more commonly. Sleep-paralysis episodes have been linked to hypertension, seizures, and narcolepsy, a sleep disorder where people lose their ability to regulate sleep cycles and can fall asleep at random and unexpected moments.

While stress, anxiety, and depression often trigger the episodes, we can't exactly control these factors. So beyond trying to reduce stress and getting plenty of sleep, how can you prevent the terrifying onset of sleep paralysis? But if you do wake and find yourself unable to move, focus all your energy on wiggling a toe or finger. "So long as you can move one muscle, that breaks the paralysis,"

Seek a Board Certified Sleep Physician for further help, I f you experience these symptoms.

*Spotting the sleep apnea symptoms*

By Amanda MacMillan, Life by DailyBurn,CNN

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Between 5% and 15% of middle-aged adults probably suffer from sleep apnea, Grandner says, although it often goes undiagnosed and untreated. And that's bad news, since studies have shown strong associations between sleep apnea and high-blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart attacks and other cardiovascular conditions.

For people with sleep apnea, airway obstruction is so severe that breathing slows to a trickle. It may even stop for seconds at a time. These episodes are called apneas, at which point the brain sends alert signals to the body, forcing a gasp, a gag or an extra powerful snore.

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"A lot of people think sleep apnea will cause them to suffocate, but it won't," says Grandner. "You're still getting enough air to breathe --and if not, your brain will wake you up." (Note, though, that according to the Mayo Clinic, for those with underlying heart disease, sleep apnea can lead to sudden death due to cardiac arrest.) The bigger risk, he says, is the long-term damage it can do.

Fluctuating oxygen levels throughout the night causes stress and oxidative damage to cells within your body. They also force the brain to be on high-alert all night and to deliver a shot of adrenaline to the heart every time an apnea occurs, when the body and brain are ideally supposed to be resting and recovering.