WHAT ARE PARASOMNIAS?

Quick Facts:
Parasomnias are unwanted physical events or experiences that happen while falling asleep, sleeping, or waking up.

KEY POINTS:
- Parasomnias involve sleep-related behaviors and experiences that you can't control.
- Parasomnias occur when aspects of sleep and wakefulness overlap.
- Parasomnias may include strange movements, behaviors, emotions, perceptions or dreams.
- You usually remain asleep during the event and may have no memory that it occurred.

GENERAL OVERVIEW:
Parasomnias may include abnormal movements, behaviors, emotions, perceptions or dreams. The behaviors may be complex and appear purposeful to others, but you are asleep while the behavior is taking place. Often you will have no memory that it occurred.

If you have a parasomnia, you may find it hard to sleep through the night. Some parasomnias involve incomplete arousal from deep sleep. Others emerge during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Types of parasomnias are:

**Confusional Arousals**
Mental confusion or confused behavior that occurs while you are in bed.

**Sleep Related Eating Disorder**
Out-of-control eating that occurs while you are only partially awake.

**REM Sleep Behavior Disorder**
You act out violent, action-packed dreams while you are asleep.

**Recurrent Isolated Sleep Paralysis**
You are unable to move your body as you are falling asleep or waking up.

**Bedwetting**
You urinate in your bed while sleeping.

**Nightmare Disorder**
You have disturbing dreams that cause distress or bedtime anxiety.

**Exploding Head Syndrome**
You imagine a sudden, loud noise or explosion in your head while falling asleep or waking up.

**Sleep Related Hallucinations**
You imagine seeing something or someone in your room while falling asleep or waking up.

**Sleepwalking**
You get out of bed and walk while sleeping.

**Sleep Terrors**
You sit up in bed with a loud cry or fearful scream.

How Can I Learn More?
- Talk to your board-certified sleep medicine physician.
- Visit [www.sleepeducation.org](http://www.sleepeducation.org)
AM I AT RISK?
Parasomnias have a genetic basis. Your risk is higher if other family members are affected. Parasomnias also are common in children. Parasomnias can be triggered by sleep deprivation, stress or trauma. Untreated obstructive sleep apnea also can trigger parasomnias.

TREATMENTS:
Treatment options vary depending on the type of parasomnia. These options may include behavioral therapy or medication. Your sleep doctor will recommend the best treatment option for you.

TIPS:
Practicing healthy sleep habits can help reduce the risk of parasomnias:
- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Adults should sleep 7 hours or more every night.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing.
- Don’t eat a large meal before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
- Don’t drink caffeine in the late afternoon or evening.
- Don’t drink alcohol before bedtime.
- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.

Next Steps:
- Adults should make it a priority to sleep 7 or more hours nightly.
- Teens should sleep 8 to 10 hours each night.
- Talk to your doctor about any ongoing sleep problems.
- Your doctor may refer you to an accredited sleep center for help.

Questions For Your Physician
Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

Sample Questions:
Why do I feel tired all the time?
Why do I wake up so early in the morning?