Sleep Disorders Encyclopedia Article

Sleep Disorders

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Sleep Disorders

Problems involving disruption in sleep pattern or inability to sleep.

Sleep is a period of decreased activity and muscle relaxation, characterized by patterns of deep sleep (where brain waves are slower, called non-rapid eye movement sleep) alternating with dreaming sleep, known as rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. Sleep restores energy to the body, especially to the brain and nervous system.

Sleep disorders common in childhood include **enuresis** (bedwetting), pavor nocturnus **(night terrors),** and **somnabulism** (sleepwalking). Less common in children are insomnia (sleeplessness, trouble falling, and staying asleep), and **narcolepsy** (difficulty staying awake).