

# In Search of a Good Night's Sleep



Sleep disorders affect more than a third of the population. Many people have a serious sleep disorder and don't know it. Many of these disorders have a significant impact on job performance, personal relationships, mood, sex drive and health. More specifically:

- 4% of all traffic fatalities (and nearly a third of those that occur on high-speed, long stretches of highway) are caused by a driver who falls asleep at the wheel.
- Sleepiness has been implicated as a contributing factor to major industrial accidents and environmental disasters.
- Loud snoring can be a source of severe strain on relationships, and can cause insomnia for the bed partner.
- In children, sleep apnea can produce symptoms that resemble depression and/or attention deficit disorder, and lead to poor school performance and behavior problems.
- Sleep apnea is associated with an increased risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, an irregular heartbeat, stroke and heart failure.
- Untreated insomnia can worsen depression.
- "Phase delay" is a sleep disorder in adolescents that can impact school performance.
- Daytime sleepiness diminishes the ability to concentrate.

## Sleep Disorders

An estimated 40 million Americans are affected by sleep disorders, 95% of whom remain undiagnosed. Signs and symptoms of potentially serious sleep disorders include:

- Loud snoring
- Gaps between breaths, or gasping for breath while asleep
- Unpleasant sensations in your legs while sleeping
- Sleepiness and fatigue during the day
- Difficulty staying alert and awake
- Trouble falling asleep, or awakening too often or too early

*Sleep apnea* is characterized by repetitive episodes of blockage of the throat that occur during sleep. People with this disorder often snore very loudly and are tired during the day. Approximately 4% of adult males and 2% of adult females have sleep apnea. An overnight sleep study confirms the diagnosis. Treatment consists of a small nasal pressurized mask, surgery and/or an oral appliance.

*Insomnia* is characterized by difficulty sleeping. People with insomnia often have problems falling asleep or maintaining sleep. They often complain of daytime fatigue and irritability. Approximately 30% of adults have some degree of insomnia. Treatment usually consists of a combination of behavioral modification and medication.

*Restless leg syndrome* is a disorder associated with discomfort in the limbs. Described as an “irritable” sensation in the legs, or less commonly in the arms, it is eased with movement. This sensation may make it difficult to fall asleep or to sit for a long period of time. Medications are very effective for treating this disorder.

*Narcolepsy* is a disorder characterized by excessive daytime sleepiness, sudden weakness in the body, hallucination while half asleep, and a sensation of not being able to move while half asleep. Most commonly, people with narcolepsy only report excessive daytime sleepiness. Many people have a genetic propensity for developing narcolepsy. Though it is often misdiagnosed, narcolepsy is easily treated by a combination of medications.

*REM behavior disorder* is diagnosed when people act out their dreams while sleeping. It is not uncommon for people with REM behavior disorder to injure themselves or their bed partner, for instance by swinging their arms as if fighting someone or climbing out of bed and running around the room while still asleep. Low doses of sedatives are very effective at correcting this disorder.

*Sleep onset association disorder* is usually characterized by an infant's inability to fall asleep alone. Parents typically respond by rocking the baby, providing a bottle or pacifier, or even putting the baby in the car in the middle of the night for a drive. Behavioral treatment is usually very effective.

*Limit-setting sleep disorder* is the diagnosis for children who constantly refuse or stall going to bed. Classic examples are behavioral patterns such as asking for another story or drink of water over and over again. Behavioral treatment is usually very effective.

*Phase delay* is a disorder that occurs predominantly in adolescents. It is characterized by difficulty going to sleep and waking up. Light therapy and melatonin are very effective if the patient is motivated to change.



Our rooms are spacious, attractively furnished, and very comfortable.

### Do You Have a Sleep Disorder?

A majority of people who have sleep disorders don't know it – and don't realize there is help available. Answer these questions to determine if you may have a sleep problem:

- Do you have difficulty sleeping through the night?
- Are you sleepy during the day?
- Do you frequently snore loudly?
- Have you been told that there are short periods when you stop breathing at night?
- Are you a restless sleeper?
- Do you walk in your sleep?
- Do you act out your dreams?
- Do you have morning headaches?
- Do you have unrefreshing sleep?
- Do you ever feel like you can't move, either when going to bed or waking up?
- Do you experience sudden episodes of weakness in any part of your body during emotional moments?
- When going to sleep, do you get an irritable or creepy feeling in your legs that improves when you move?

Even a single “yes” answer in this list of questions could indicate that you have a sleep disorder. Ask your primary care doctor whether a sleep consultation might be appropriate for you, or you can call the Center for Sleep Medicine directly for more information at (203) 276-2300.

### You Can Be Helped

Effective treatment is available for most people with sleep problems and disorders. Most of our patients achieve better sleep and greater daytime alertness following treatment at our center.

### What Is a Sleep Test?

Many patients who come to our Connecticut Center for Sleep Medicine require an overnight study. This involves arriving at the center, located within Stamford Hospital, on a scheduled date between 7 and 9 pm. Our rooms are comfortable and attractive, furnished to resemble hotel accommodations. You'll have an opportunity to settle in, after which our sleep technology specialist will prepare you for the sleep study, which involves using adhesive electrodes to connect you to our monitoring equipment. This process is not uncomfortable and typically takes about an hour. You are then free to watch television or read until you are ready to go to sleep as you normally would in your spacious, private room. The sleep study will be conducted throughout the night while you sleep. Most patients are able to leave for their normal routine in the morning.

### The Connecticut Center for Sleep Medicine

Our state-of-the-art sleep center is located on the third floor of Stamford Hospital. The six private rooms are beautifully decorated, each attractively furnished with a queen-size bed, a luxury reclining chair, cable television with VCR, and a private bath with a shower. As one of the largest sleep centers in the state, we are generally able to accommodate patients within a few weeks, typically faster than other facilities. Our rooms are large enough to accommodate a caregiver, important for pediatric patients, or if a loved one who wishes to spend the night with the patient.

### What Is the Cost?

Most insurance companies and managed care plans cover the cost of evaluating, testing and treating sleep disorders. The center's staff will assist you and your doctor in obtaining the necessary pre-authorizations from your health plan. Under special circumstances, individual payment plans can be arranged. Don't let cost cause a delay in diagnosis and treatment.

### How Do I Get an evaluation?

Your primary care physician or specialist can refer you for a consultation, or you can call the Center for Sleep Medicine directly at (203) 276-2300.

## The Doctors

The Connecticut Center for Sleep Medicine is staffed by board certified sleep physicians who are experts in diagnosing and treating all sleep disorders. In addition, our sleep center has one of the few board certified specialists trained in pediatric sleep medicine. In order to provide optimal care for our patients, the center works very closely with highly trained specialists in the fields of Neurology, Psychiatry, Psychology and Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose and Throat).

### **Dominic Joseph Roca, M.D., Ph.D.**

*Medical Director of Sleep Medicine,  
Stamford Hospital*

**Medical School:** State University of New York Health Science Center, Brooklyn

**Residency:** New York University School of Medicine

**Fellowships:** Boston University, Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine; Boston University & Beth Israel Hospitals, Allergy & Immunology, Internal Medicine, Sleep Medicine

**Specialized Training:** Pediatric Sleep Medicine, with Dr. Richard Ferber, internationally recognized expert in pediatric sleep medicine

**Board Certifications:** Pulmonary Medicine, Critical Care; Allergy & Immunology, Internal Medicine, Sleep Medicine  
Diplomate of American Board of Internal Medicine (pulmonary & critical care and allergy & immunology)

### **Steven A. Thau, M.D.**

*Associate Director of Sleep Medicine,  
Stamford Hospital*

**Medical School:** Albert Einstein College of Medicine

**Residency:** Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania

**Fellowships:** Yale University School of Medicine, Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine, Sleep Medicine

**Board Certifications:** Critical Care, Pulmonary Disease, Sleep Medicine; Internal Medicine  
Diplomate of American Board of Internal Medicine (pulmonary & critical care)

### **Paul Sachs, M.D.**

*Director of Pulmonary Medicine,  
Stamford Hospital*

**Medical School:** New York University School of Medicine

**Residency:** The New York University – Cornell University Medical Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

**Fellowships:** Montefiore Medical Center and Bronx Municipal Hospital Center, Pulmonary Medicine

**Specialized Training:** Sleep Medicine at Montefiore Sleep-Wake Disorder Center with Dr. Michael Thorpy, internationally recognized expert in sleep medicine

**Board Certifications:** Critical Care, Pulmonary Disease; Internal Medicine  
Diplomate of American Board of Internal Medicine (pulmonary & critical care)

### **Lester J. Krasnogor, M.D.**

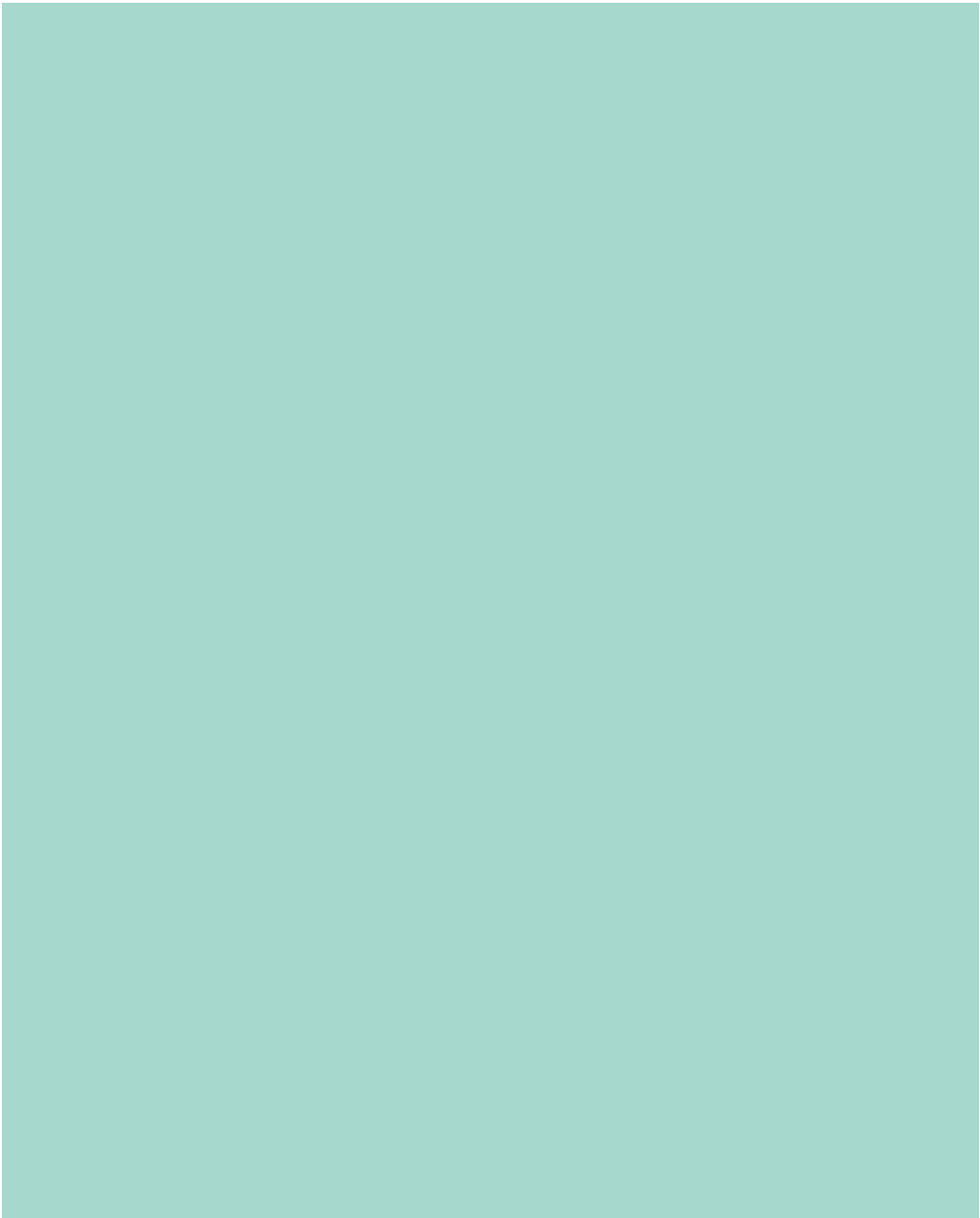
*Specialist in Sleep Disordered Breathing*

**Medical School:** New York University School of Medicine

**Residency:** Duke University – University of Pittsburgh

**Fellowships:** Duke University & Yale University, Pulmonary Physiology & Clinical Pulmonary Disease

**Board Certifications:** Pulmonary Disease; Internal Medicine; Critical Care  
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