

SleepCaptions

Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome (DSPS)

Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome: A disorder of sleep timing that results in a propensity to sleep at least two or more hours earlier than the socially acceptable time for sleep. Older persons, who have a natural inclination to fall asleep earlier, tend to develop this condition.

Features

The timing of sleep is shifted earlier by two or more hours in those with Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome. Sometimes known as “morning people” or “larks”, those with ASPS have difficulty staying awake in the evening. However, their drowsiness should not be mistaken for a hypersomnia like Narcolepsy because the quality and length of sleep is otherwise normal.

Sleepiness develops pretty early in the evening but lasts for a normal duration (eight hours). Typical sleep onset times are between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. (no later than 9:00 p.m.) and wake times between 1:00 and 3:00 a.m. (no later than 5:00 a.m.). Daytime activities such as work or school are not usually affected by this schedule, which provides for wakefulness in the earlier part of the day. However, people with an advanced sleep phase find that their evening activities are often missed or cut short by the need to retire early.

When a person with Advanced Sleep Phase is left to his or her schedule, the quality and amount of sleep is normal, unless an additional sleep disorder is present.

Diagnosis

A physical exam is recommended to rule out the possibility of another sleep disorder or health problem. Since the symptoms of Advanced Sleep Phase are similar to Hypersomnias as

well as normal variations of sleep, a sleep specialist can identify the exact reason for the advanced sleep pattern.

A Sleep Log or diary of sleep habits is an integral part of diagnosing ASPS. The sleep log will demonstrate a regular pattern of advanced sleep-that is otherwise normal. Sleep studies are not normally needed to confirm a diagnoses of this condition, unless sleep problems are severe. If needed, a Polysomnogram will not only pinpoint sleep times, but measure brainwaves, heart rate, breathing, and muscular activity during sleep.

Treatment

Some people--especially those who are retired or who have careers that allow them to work early in the day--choose to adapt to their advanced sleep pattern. Living with ASPS poses no health risk. Otherwise, advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome responds well to behavioral therapies.

Chronotherapy aims to reset the internal biological clock. Patients systematically advance (or delay) bedtime over the course of five or six consecutive days, until the desired bedtime is reached.

Light Therapy resets the internal clock by using a full spectrum lamp or portable visor set to 10000 lux for 30 to 90 minutes early in the evening.

Healthy Sleep Hygiene such as avoiding caffeine after noon and alcohol within four hours of bedtime will allow other therapies to work better.



Do I Have ASPS?

I fall asleep at least 2 hours before my desired bedtime.

I wake up at least 2 hours before my desired wake time.

If left to my own sleep schedule, I would sleep for a normal amount of time.

If left to my own sleep schedule, I would sleep soundly.

My natural sleep time is stable, just advanced (too early).

I have had this stable but delayed sleep pattern for at least 7 days.

Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome Mechanics

Although the exact cause of Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome is not known, it is related to circadian rhythms, which regulate the internal biological clock. A Desynchronization develops between the environment (desired sleep time) and an individual's biological clock. This desynchronization is not affected by travel or a change in the environment. Rather, the natural inclination to sleep is delayed because the 'internal clock' is set to a later time.

ASPS is sometimes mistaken for a Hypersomnia because the later bedtime leads people to believe they cannot sleep at all. In reality, they have no problem falling asleep, when the time is right for them.



Need more information?

Visit the SleepMedicine Education web site at: sleepmedicineducation.com for additional publications. See also:

- SleepIssues:** "Out of Sync"
"Children and Sleep"
SleepGuides: "Treating Sleep Disorders"

To schedule an appointment at any Sleep Medicine Centers location, visit www.sleepmedicinecenters.com or call:

(716)92-DREAM
(877)53-SNORE

Did You Know?

A high prevalence of Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome exists in the elderly, according to various studies.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome occurs in approximately 1% of middle aged adults.

A genetic link to Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome has been shown

to exist in some families, according to a 1999 study through the University of California at San Francisco.

Although some advancement of the sleep phase is common in the elderly, true Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome is uncommon.

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Risks for ASPS

- ✓ Age (60 years and older)
- ✓ Family history
- ✓ Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Lack of exposure to natural (sun) light

Effects of ASPS

- ✓ Excessive daytime tiredness
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Altered eating habits
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Inability to participate in social activities

