

# SleepCaptions

## Additional Circadian Rhythm Disorders

The following list describes some of the less common circadian rhythm disorders:

**Circadian Disorder Due to a Drug or Substance:** any number of changes in circadian cycles directly due to the use of over-the-counter, prescription, or recreational drugs. A person experiencing this condition would not have circadian problems if they did not take the drug(s) that aggravates their sleep. Sleep patterns may be advanced, delayed, irregular, or free-running (see entries below). Drugs likely to precipitate circadian changes include: alcohol, sleeping pills, muscle relaxants, pain medications, certain anti-depressants, seizure medications, Parkinson's medications, antihistamines, allergy medications, cancer therapies, blood pressure and heart medications, as well as certain herbs, vitamins and minerals. The doctor prescribing the medication may be able to adjust the dosage, type of medication, or patient activities to alleviate sleep problems. (See also, [Drugs and Sleep](#).)

**Circadian Disorder Due to a Medical Condition:** changes in circadian rhythms directly due to a medical condition. If the medical condition did not exist, then the circadian disruption would not exist. Depending on the disease or condition, sleep patterns may be advanced, delayed, irregular, or free-running. Medical conditions likely to disrupt circadian rhythms include: dementia disorders, movement disorders such as Parkinson's Disease, blindness, certain liver diseases, kidney disease, and brain injuries. The doctor treating the aggravating condition or a sleep specialist will treat sleep issues with respect to the patient's health. Good sleep behaviors, bright light therapy, or changes in medication often help. (See also, [Drugs and Sleep](#).) (See also, [Physical Illness and Sleep](#).)

**Free-Running (Non-entrained Type):** a circadian rhythm disorder characterized by sleep times that are out of alignment with "normal" sleep times. Sleep is delayed a bit more each night, making it

seem like a delayed sleep phase. Eventually, sleep is delayed until morning and then afternoon, making it seem like an advanced sleep phase. Sleep times move in and out of alignment as the cycle repeats itself. Treatment under the care of a sleep specialist aims to stimulate wakefulness at appropriate times, so that the circadian clock resets itself. Wakefulness is stimulated using bright light therapy and scheduled activity.

**Irregular Sleep-Wake Rhythm:** sleep cycles that are broken into small pieces. People with this condition nap frequently but briefly over a 24 hour period. There is no clear pattern of sleep. At night, it feels like insomnia because of the frequent awakenings. During the day, it feels like a hypersomnia or too much sleep. Irregular sleep patterns are normal in early infancy. In adulthood, it is associated with brain damage, dementia, or mental retardation. Treatment involves stimulation such as light therapy and planned activity to promote wakefulness during the day and sleep at night.



## Do I Have A Circadian Rhythm Disorder?

I consistently fall asleep and awaken at least two hours earlier or later than desired.

I have trouble sleeping when I am supposed to sleep.

I have trouble staying awake when I am supposed to be awake.

If left to my own sleep schedule, I would have no trouble sleeping.

If allowed to maintain an irregular sleep schedule, I would have no trouble sleeping.

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## The Most Common Circadian Rhythm Disorders

### Circadian Rhythm Disorders

**Circadian Rhythm Disorders:** (sur cay dee yan) [circa = about, plus dies = day] A group of sleep disorders affecting the timing of the sleep-wake cycle, among other biological rhythms. Both sleep and wakefulness occur at the wrong time, although the amount of sleep is usually adequate—if enough sleep time is allowed. Normal human Circadian Rhythms promote sleep at night, for about seven to nine hours.



#### **Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome (DSPS):**

the chronic inability to fall asleep (and therefore awoken after sleeping) until much later than desired. The timing of sleep is delayed for up to several hours.

#### **Advanced Sleep Phase Syndrome (ASPS):**

the chronic need to fall asleep (and therefore awoken after sleeping) much earlier than desired. The timing of sleep is advanced for up to several hours.

**Shiftwork Sleep Disorder:** a work schedule that occurs during the normal sleep time and which results in an inability to adequately rest at another time.

**Jetlag:** the inability to attain a successful pattern of sleep and wakefulness following travel to a different time zone.

### Need more information?

Visit the SleepMedicine Education web site at: [sleepmedicineeducation.com](http://sleepmedicineeducation.com) for additional publications. See also:

**SleepIssues:** "Out of Sync"

**SleepGuides:** "Treating Sleep Disorders"

To schedule an appointment at any Sleep Medicine Centers location, visit

[www.sleepmedicinecenters.com](http://www.sleepmedicinecenters.com)

or call:

(716)92-DREAM

(877)53-SNORE



### Did You Know?

According to the American College of Physicians, Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome among adolescents is as high as 7%, with males predominating.

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.

Compared to their day shift counterparts, shift workers are more likely to suffer from insomnia and excessive daytime sleepiness (61% vs. 47% and 30% vs. 18% respectively), according to the National Sleep Foundation 2005 Sleep In America poll.