

Sleep or fatigue?



There is a

difference

Are you sleepy, tired, exhausted, fatigued? Whether you're dozing off in front of your computer or taking a twenty-minute nap that turns into two hours, it can be hard to know at which point to seek help for a sleep problem. But if a lack of sleep is making it hard to get through the day, it's time to consider whether you might have an underlying sleep disorder. Although sleepiness and fatigue are often used interchangeably, we make a distinction between the terms.

Sleepiness at the right time is normal.

You naturally feel sleepy in the evening as a reflection of your circadian rhythm, the 24-hour sleep-wake cycle. Feeling sleepy is your body's signal that it's time to wind down and get ready for bed.

A good night's sleep typically solves the problem of feeling sleepy. If you've gotten a full night of sleep (adults need 7-9 hours every night, consistently) and you still feel like you need a nap whenever you're at rest, that could be a sign of a sleep disorder. Sleep apnea, narcolepsy, or hypersomnia could all be potential causes of your excessive daytime sleepiness.

Fatigue can mean many different things.

Feeling fatigued or exhausted can also be a red flag. When you're fatigued or exhausted, you have little energy and motivation, and feel as if you're pulling a heavy weight to get through your day. If you try to sleep, you can't because you're not actually sleepy. There are a number of medical (both physical and mental health) reasons for feeling fatigued/exhausted, including heart disease, anemia, autoimmune disorders, and depression, to name a few.

Although sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea are typically associated with excessive daytime sleepiness, some patients may experience fatigue instead. Consult with a doctor to help clarify what's going on.

Do you feel like your symptoms just won't go away?

Whether you feel sleepy or fatigued/exhausted, you are not at your best. If your symptoms persist even after consistently getting enough sleep, take our Sleep Checkup™.

SleepCharge can help you identify potential issues and put you on the road to better sleep.

SOURCES: Johns Hopkins Medicine, Sleep Foundation, NCBI, Mayo Clinic

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or scan the QR code.**

