

Sleepwalking



Overview

This is a behavior disorder that usually affects your deep sleep. During a sleepwalking episode, you may get out of bed, perform complex tasks and interact with other people. But you are still in a state of sleep, and you aren't aware of what you are doing. When you wake up, you may have no memory of what you did. This can be dangerous. It can cause problems in your life.

Causes

We don't fully understand why people sleepwalk. It's more common in children, and many people outgrow it in their teens. Certain genes may make you more prone to sleepwalking. It may be triggered by things such as stress and a poor sleep schedule. It may be linked to a wide range of medical conditions, such as asthma, panic attacks, and seizure disorders. It's also linked to Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

Symptoms

When you sleepwalk, you may sit up in bed. You may get up and walk around. Often, sleepwalkers have a blank expression and don't respond when others talk to them. But some do talk. During a sleepwalking episode, you may do complex things such as getting dressed or eating. You may do unusual, dangerous or violent things. You may engage in sexual activity. You may leave your house. You may even drive a car.

Treatment

Sleepwalking can be managed with therapy. Relaxation and self-hypnosis techniques may help. If you have an underlying condition that's triggering your sleepwalking, getting treatment for that can help. Medication may be helpful, too. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.