

Tired Of Not Getting Enough Sleep?

(NAPSA)—Restless? Can't sleep? There are a number of steps you can take to promote more restful sleep, but perhaps the most important thing you can do is stop ignoring the problem.

Sleep disturbance is a problem if you chronically take a long time to fall asleep, wake up frequently during the night, are awake for longer and longer periods of time, and total only a few hours of sleep per night.

Lack of sleep is also one of the most common problems associated with depression and bipolar disorder, yet one that is often not recognized as a symptom or reported to physicians. According to the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), this may be a factor in why people are not diagnosed when they are younger. Results from a recent DBSA survey indicate that:

- Sleep disturbance symptoms including racing thoughts, emotional stress and restlessness can be signs of something more serious such as depression or bipolar disorder. Irritability, mood swings and a decreased need for sleep also are signs of these potentially-fatal illnesses that affect more than 22.5 million people.

Lack of sleep directly and severely affects quality of life. "If someone is experiencing, restlessness and irritability along with sadness or emotional ups and downs for more than two weeks," said Dr. Ellen Frank, professor of psychiatry and psychology, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, "they should seek medical attention from a specialist who is trained to diagnose—or perhaps just rule out—depression or bipolar disorder."

To get a better night's sleep, experts recommend: reducing your caffeine, nicotine and alcohol consumption; drinking less fluids



Chronic sleeplessness can be a sign of something more serious.

before going to sleep; avoiding heavy meals close to bedtime; exercising regularly, preferably in the afternoon; and establishing a regular bedtime and wake time schedule.

DBSA has launched a new Web site, www.sleeplessinamerica.org, which offers educational resources that provide a screen for sleeplessness, information on when to see a doctor and a questionnaire to determine when it might be symptomatic of a more serious illness. To order or download a sleep kit, visit www.sleeplessinamerica.org. For additional information on depression, bipolar disorder, treatments and more, visit DBSA's Web site at www.dbsalliance.org or call 800-826-3632.

DBSA is a patient-directed advocacy organization for depression and bipolar disorder with more than 1,000 peer-run support groups nationwide. DBSA's mission is to improve the lives of those living with mood disorders. Assisted by a 65-member Scientific Advisory Board, the organization helps more than 4 million people a year.