

# Understanding Sleep Disorders



Sleep is critical for our health and survival as it helps improve our immune system and protects us from sickness.

Sleep disorders are characterized by changes in sleeping habits that can impact one's health, cognitive performance, emotions, safety, and general wellbeing.

## Sleep Disorders in Australia

About **one in five Australians** is estimated to have a sleep disorder such as insomnia, OSA, RLS, hypersomnia, or circadian rhythm disorders.



## Types of Sleep Disorders

Although there are many sleep disorders, the most common types include the following:

- Insomnia: having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep at night
- Narcolepsy: extreme sleepiness during the day and falling asleep suddenly
- Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and central sleep apnea: abnormal patterns of breathing while asleep
- Restless legs syndrome (RLS): a need to move your legs or discomfort in one's legs that keeps them from falling asleep
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Circadian rhythm disorders
- Hypersomnia: excessive daytime sleepiness
- Parasomnias: sleepwalking, sleep talking, bedwetting, nightmares, and teeth grinding
- REM sleep behaviour disorder: acting out one's dreams while asleep

## Managing Sleep Disorders

The most common treatment for insomnia involves medications tailored to a person's needs and underlying problems. For instance, if a person has anxiety or depression, their treatment plan may include sleeping pills and antidepressants.

Other therapeutic possibilities include:

- Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Relaxation methods
- Changes to one's lifestyle include regular daily exercise, mindfulness, and refraining from alcohol and drinks with caffeine.



## Getting Help



Call us on **1300 151 110** to book an initial consultation with a compassionate psychologist.  
[www.unboundminds.com.au](http://www.unboundminds.com.au)