

Partner talks in their sleep? Here's how to slumber soundly

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Parasomnia—it's a blanket term for pesky behaviors that wreak havoc on your sleep. A third of U.S. adults get less than the recommended amount of shut-eye, a nationwide struggle linked to chronic diseases ranging

from depression to Type 2 diabetes. Some parasomnias, however, don't affect just the sleeper; they can affect others within earshot.

A common parasomnia plaguing Americans is somniloquy, better known as talking in your sleep. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, it's a disorder that affects up to 65% of the population at some point during their lives. And it can be significantly disruptive to bedfellows.

"There are some things you, the bed partner, can do to save your sleep," Dr. Carlos Schenck, a professor and senior staff psychiatrist at the Hennepin County Medical Center at the University of Minnesota, told CNN. "But first make sure there are no hidden issues that might be causing the problem."

The academy reported that by itself, sleep talking is harmless. But it can also be a symptom of another more harmful sleep disorder.

"If your sleep talking episodes increase in frequency, emerge at an [older age](#), or are accompanied by other symptoms such as limb movements or [daytime sleepiness](#), you should talk to your medical provider," the academy said. "In many cases, treatment is not needed. If sleep talking is a symptom of another sleep disorder, your medical provider will treat the underlying condition."

Jennifer Mundt, assistant professor of sleep medicine, psychiatry, and behavioral sciences at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, told CNN the first line of defense against losing sleep to a bedfellow's somniloquy is a white noise generator—a loud fan will do.

"Earplugs or comfortable noise-canceling headphones may also help," she said. Schenck added that it can be helpful to go to bed before your

sleep-talking partner. Once you're asleep, it will be more difficult for them to keep you up all night.

There is no way to predict when a person will develop a parasomnia, but a little detective work can help reveal a partner's sleep talking triggers.

"The person who is sleep talking has to be very considerate of the partner," Schenck said. "If sleeping on your back makes it worse, then get a nightshirt where you can put a [tennis ball](#) in the back of the shirt so you can't sleep on your back."

Common triggers include stress, alcohol, [sleep deprivation](#), sleep pattern disruption or sleeping in a new environment.

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