

# Our Doctors

If a good night's sleep is a luxury you rarely get, then read this article. According to sleep experts, the average Atlantan is lucky to log six to seven hours of sleep at night—a deficit that leads to all sorts of repercussions from falling asleep behind the wheel, to headaches, hypertension, irritability and memory loss.

Why are we so sleep deprived? Our decrease in deep, restful sleep is attributed to many sources, from snoring bedmates who interrupt our shut-eye to our own inability to quiet our thoughts when the lights go down, according to DeKalb Medical Sleep Disorders Center medical director Dr. Rana Hasan. “Many Atlantans also have long work commutes that require them to get up at the crack of dawn,” shares neurologist and sleep specialist Dr. Sara Shuler. In addition, these “road warriors” are often racing to drop off kids at daycare shaving off even more precious minutes of sleep time.

While it's easy to shrug off sleep loss to older age, the truth is you can sleep well at any age according to Dr. Joseph Weissman, a neurologist and sleep disorder specialist at DeKalb Medical. Not only is seven to eight hours of sleep desirable, it's necessary for good heart health, metabolism and mental wellness.”

Few of us really know how well we sleep at night, which is why your bed partner can provide valuable clues about your sleep health. For instance, does snoring drive your spouse to another room in the middle of the night or do they need to get in bed before you so they can fall asleep first? Even worse, do they watch in envy wondering how in the world you can sleep through excessive racket?

“Loud snoring and sounds that mimic choking while you sleep are not normal and are usually indicators of a serious and sometimes fatal disorder called sleep apnea,” explains Dr. Rab Hasan. Characterized by pauses in breathing during sleep, apnea not only impacts the quality of your sleep but the quality of your health over time.



## Snoring Got You Sleeping Alone?

Here's How  
to Get Back in the Bedroom

Each episode, called an apnea, lasts anywhere from 10 to 90 seconds. "Blocked airflow causes oxygen levels in the blood to drop and increases respiratory effort," shares Shuler. The labored sleep can cause fatigue, headaches, sleepiness, weight gain and even heart failure. In short, sleep apnea can be deadly, and is even more so because few people are aware they have it.



While it's estimated that up to 18 million people, or ten percent of Americans, have sleep apnea, patients with Type 2 Diabetes seem to have the highest risk with half estimated to also have apnea. "That's why it's so important to take action before something happens."

Taking action can be as simple as getting a referral from your physician for a sleep study that will measure your breathing patterns, brain waves, oxygen levels, and heart rhythm during sleep. Once diagnosed, mild cases of apnea can be treated with weight-loss or use of a sleep wedge that holds the body in a side position. More severe cases of apnea may require surgery or the use of a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine while you sleep.

For Seoan Roland the results were remarkable. Suffering from chronic headaches, restlessness at night and fatigue during the day, he followed his wife's advice and decided to have a sleep study at DeKalb Medical. "The sleep specialist made me feel so at-home and relaxed," remembers Roland, who slept in a cozy, queen-sized bed while staff monitored him overnight. With a diagnosis of sleep apnea confirmed, Roland now sleeps with a CPAP machine and his

wife "in my arms."

You can start sleeping better, too. Ask your doctor if you could benefit from a sleep study. For optimum safety and results, locate a center that is fully accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and also by the Joint Commission.

## Could You Have Sleep Apnea?

### 1. Do you snore?

- a. Yes     b. No
- c. Don't know

### 2. Has anyone noticed that you quit breathing during your sleep?

- a. Nearly every day
- b. 3-4 times a week
- c. 1-2 times a week
- d. 1-2 times a month
- e. Never or nearly never

### 3. Do you have high blood pressure?

- a. Yes     b. No
- c. Don't know

### 4. During your waking time, do you feel tired, fatigued or not up to par?

- a. Nearly every day
- b. 3-4 times a week
- c. 1-2 times a week
- d. 1-2 times a month
- e. Never or nearly never

### 5. Have you ever nodded off or fallen asleep while driving a vehicle?

- a. Yes     b. No

If you answered "yes" to any questions, consult with your doctor. There is a strong likelihood you could have apnea. For a detailed sleep disorders health assessment, visit [www.dekalbmedical.org](http://www.dekalbmedical.org). Start Sleeping Better Now. Call the DeKalb Medical Sleep Disorders Center at 404.502.5927

## Meet the Sleep Specialists at DeKalb Medical's Center of Excellence



**Rana Rab Hasan, M.D. FCCP, D, ABISM** is board-certified in Internal Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine, and

Sleep Medicine. Dr. Rab Hasan earned her medical degree from Dow Medical College in Pakistan. She completed a residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care at Emory University Hospital.



**Joseph Weissman, M.D., Ph.D.** is board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He earned his medical

degree and also a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Case Western Reserve University. He holds an undergraduate degree in chemistry from Cornell University. He completed a neurophysiology fellowship at Emory University where he later joined the faculty.



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