

Sleeping Disorder

Going to bed only when mind and body are really tired

No, it is not very pleasant to stay awake in the night, stare at the clock constantly or brood over problems. The one who cannot sleep feels like “knocked out” the following day. Sleeping disorders can have various reasons. These reasons were discussed by Prof. Jean Haan, Director of the Dept. of Neurology at the hospital Maria Hilf and Dr. Jürgen Vieten, psychiatrist and psychotherapist and the readers, who called on the occasion of an experts’ phone chat on the subject “sleeping disorders”.

Who suffers from sleeping disorders can only be determined by the expert, since about 80 different kinds of sleeping disorders exist. Approx. two thirds are mental disorders, according to Dr. Vieten. The ones who took the chance to talk to Prof. Haan and Dr. Vieten complained about problems to fall asleep and sleep through the night, restless legs, depressions and tiredness during daytime or compulsive eating during nights.

Sleeping disorders examined by the neurologist are, for example, restless legs. The so-called RSL-syndrome occurs in forms of a prickle, pain or a numb feeling in the legs.

Examination in the sleep laboratory

The reason for neurologically-associated sleeping disorders can be clarified by an examination in the sleep laboratory. This is done in cases where a suspicion of an organic disease exists, if it is unclear where the sleeping disorders come from and in cases where respiration failures occur, explained Prof. Haan.

The one suffering from sleeping disorders can clarify some personal details in advance. Elderly people, for example, do not need as much sleep and should not be astonished if they go to bed before midnight and wake up around 4 or 5 am. Prof. Haan said “these persons are well-rested”. For the ones lying in bed and staring at the ceiling he would recommend not to stay in bed but get up and do something until tiredness comes back naturally.

Most of the sleeping disorders are caused by psychological strains such as stress or loss of a partner, according to Dr. Vieten who also mentioned, that approx. 30% of sleeping disorders are affected by depressions. The psychiatrist and psychologist can offer help in terms of a combination of medications, cognitive behavioral or depth psychological therapy. But sometimes even slight changes can already lead to a good sleep such as, for example, to let some fresh air into the bedroom before going to bed.