

Sleep Talking

Definition

- Sleep talking is a partial wake-up in which children talk in their sleep
- They act confused and can't be fully awakened, but are usually calm
- Occur in 10 to 30% of normal children. Sleep talking is so common and harmless looking that most parents don't ask about it.
- Peak age is 2 to 12 years
- Cause: Sleep talking runs in families
- Triggers: Occur more frequently if the child has a sleep debt
- Also called somniloquy

Health Information

Symptoms

- While sleep talking, the ability to understand the child's speech varies.
- Some talk clearly, but the words don't make sense. Others make speech sounds that are mumbled. Rarely does the child say something that has a clear meaning.
- Sleep speech also sounds different than normal wakeful speech. Most sleep talkers talk without any emotion. The child is usually not agitated.
- Sleep talk goes on for 1 to 5 minutes. It then stops of its own accord with the child falling back into deep sleep.
- They don't realize you are there, even though their eyes are wide open and staring.
- Episodes usually start 1 to 3 hours after falling asleep.
- In the morning, your child can't remember what happened.
- Sleep talking can also occur during naps.

Care Advice

- 1. Don't Worry About the Sleep Talking:**
 - Sleep talking is normal in many children. It runs in families.
 - Your child will usually only talk for 1 to 5 minutes.
 - It usually doesn't mean anything important is happening.
- 2. Don't Try to Wake Up Your Child:**
 - Sleep talkers cannot easily be fully awakened, no matter what you do
 - There is no way to stop the sleep talking episode.
 - Shaking or shouting at your child will just cause your child to become upset.
- 3. Prepare Babysitters for Possible Sleep Talking:**
 - Explain to people who care for your child that sleep talking is normal for him or her.
 - Important for sleepovers. Reason: Sleep talking is more common in a strange environment.
 - Understanding this will prevent them from over-reacting.
- 4. Help Roommates Deal with the Sleep Talking:**
 - If sleep talking is disruptive to others, earplugs may help.

5. **What to Expect:**

- Children will usually do less sleep talking when they reach adolescence.
- But if adults in your family talk in their sleep, your child will probably do the same.

Call Your Doctor If

- Your child has frequent snoring
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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