



Yikes! Have you ever nodded off in a really inappropriate place?

No, Feeling This Tired Is Not Normal

It seems like you're getting your eight hours a night, but you're still dragging your way through the day. What gives?

BY MADONNA BEHEN

When you've got that zonked-out, "get me a caffeine IV, stat!" feeling, the reason is usually obvious. You may be sleep-deprived because you've got small kids, your husband snores, you're worried about work or money—or any of life's other little anxieties that can sabotage your shut-eye.

But what if you've been getting to bed regularly at a decent hour and you still feel as though you've pulled an all-nighter? Then it's worth investigating whether that chronic tiredness might have something to do with a larger health problem.

Thyroid Trouble

One of the first things you want to rule out is a thyroid issue. And guess what? It's tricky because unexplained fatigue can be a symptom of a sluggish or an overactive gland, says Jeffrey Garber, M.D., associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and immediate past president of the American College of Endocrinology.

OTHER SYMPTOMS

Your thyroid gland (in the front of your neck) affects your metabolism, so when it goes out of whack it can really mess up your quality of life. If the thyroid

hormones in your blood are low (known as hypothyroidism), you might feel cold all the time, gain weight despite your best efforts not to, and deal with dry skin, thinning hair, brittle nails and constipation. If your thyroid's working overtime (hyperthyroidism), you may drop pounds without trying (no, this isn't always a good thing) and notice heart palpitations, thinning hair and frequent bowel movements.

HOW DOCTORS MAKE THE CALL

They'll take some blood and ship it off to a lab for tests that look at your thyroid hormone levels.

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