- Sleep disorders / Sleep apnea

Sleep problems? Get yourself checked by a doctor, says DOH

BusinessMirror · 19 Feb 2026 · B5 · By Claudeth Mocon-ciriaco

GOOD sleep is essential for our health and emotional well-being. It helps the body repair itself. But not everyone gets enough good sleep, affecting the body's normal function during the day. One of the common sleep disorders is sleep apnea.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that sleep apnea occurs when a person's breathing stops and restarts many times while sleeping.

Dr. Lyndon Henry Dacanay of the Snoring and Sleep Center of East Avenue Medical Center (EAMC) explained that sleep apnea happens when one's airway gets blocked, affecting how much oxygen the body gets during his sleep.

"Bumababa yung oxygen natin, so inuutusan niya yung puso natin na magpump na magpump [ng blood]. Syempre na-overwork yung heart natin [Our oxygen levels drop and this tells our heart to pump blood harder. harder. Of course, our heart is overworked]," Dr. Dacanay said.

Cardiovascular problems

THIS, Dr. Dacanay said, leads to cardiovascular problems and uncontrolled hypertension.

"Tapos hindi lang sa puso...pwede rin siyang maka affect sa ating diabetes, insulin resistance, tapos marami rin po, mental health rin po kasi yung concentration natin naapektuhan rin po [And not just the heart... it can also affect our diabetes, insulin resistance, and many other things, including mental health because our concentration is also affected]," he added.

The DOH encourages that if a family member gasp for air during sleep, a healthcare provider should be consulted immediately.

According to Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa, the Department of Health (DOH) provides services for sleep apnea at the Snoring and Sleep Center at EAMC in Quezon City. It is open from Monday to Thursday, from 8 pm to 6 am.

The Snoring and Sleep Center also offers evaluations for snoring and other sleep-related breathing disorders.

Likewise, Herbosa added that Philhealth coverage is available for sleep apnea studies and treatments.

Cellphone use

TO help a person sleep better, Dr. Dacayan said that the use of cellphone should be avoided especially during the night.

"So yung mga nagiging problema ng pasyente natin, yung mga nag-cellphone, kasi ang blue light...kasi ang effect ng cellphone is nakakapag gising po siya [So the problem our patients have is that the blue light from cellphones can awaken you.],"he said.

The CDC said that habits that can improve your sleep include:

- Going to bed and getting up at the same time every day;
- Keeping your bedroom quiet, relaxing, and at a cool temperature;
- Turning off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime;
- Avoiding large meals and alcohol before bedtime;
- Avoiding caffeine in the afternoon or evening; and

■ Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet.

Other sleep disorders that require a visit to a healthcare provider are:

■ Insomnia

■ Restless legs syndrome

■ Narcolepsy

“Talk to your healthcare provider if you regularly have problems sleeping or notice signs or symptoms of common sleep disorders,” the CDC said.