

## Unit 7: Parasomnia

**Narrator:** For most people, sleeping is easy. For others, it can be a real nightmare.

Some people dream of being attacked and might even fight with their partners while they sleep. Other people get up and walk around in their sleep without knowing what they're doing. These sleep conditions—called parasomnia—can be dangerous. Scientists are hoping to find out why they happen.

REM sleep is the stage of sleep when we dream. Parasomnia happens during a time in the sleep cycle called NREM or non-REM. NREM contains four stages.

During stage one, your brain is producing small waves, and you are in a light sleep. In stage two, your body relaxes and your heartbeat and breathing get slower. The brain waves are larger and become further apart. The deepest sleep is during stages three and four. For most of us, our brains shut off sounds and movement from the outside world. But for sleepwalkers, the lower part of the brain wakes up, while the upper part—the thinking brain, or the mind—is asleep. This is why sleepwalkers are able to move around at night, and yet they don't remember it the next day.

With further research, scientists hope one day to fully explain this mysterious condition.