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Silent night?

By Dr. Douglas Berger, M.D., Ph D. | [ASK THE EXPERT](#)



Japanese for everybody, teens
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QUESTION

My wife talks and gnashes her teeth in her sleep. Is there a cure for this? I need a good night's sleep!

Teeth grinding (bruxism) can be caused by stress and anxiety, and it often occurs during sleep. An abnormal bite or poor dentition is a very common cause and should be evaluated by a dentist. When teeth-grinding occurs on a regular basis, the teeth can be damaged and there are protective dental guards that can be used.

Sleep-talking is common and occurs during sleep or during brief arousals from sleep. Most people do not need any treatment for this. If there are night terrors, sleep-walking, obstructive sleep apnea, muscle jerks (myoclonus) restless legs during sleep, or symptoms of an REM Sleep Behavior Disorder (characterized by the dreamer acting out his or her dreams, usually negative dreams, which involve kicking, screaming, punching, and even jumping out of bed), then evaluation by a psychiatrist and a sleep specialist is recommended.

In the case described where the woman has both teeth-grinding and sleep-talking, a thorough evaluation by a dentist, psychiatrist, and a sleep specialist can confirm whether further intervention is warranted. Stress reduction and a teeth guard at least sound like a good idea here.

Doug Berger, M.D., Ph.D

The Meguro Counseling Center provides mental health care for individuals, couples, and families, in both English and Japanese. www.megurocounseling.com

The discussions herein are meant as general information and advice only. Each person needs to make their own personal life decisions and to contact a mental health professional for consultation

if deemed appropriate.

Send your comments to: editor@tokyofamilies.com

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