



NB: This is not a word for word transcript

Alice: Hello, I'm Alice...

Stephen: And I'm Stephen.

Alice: And this is 6 Minute English! This week we're talking about **sleepwalking**.
Have you ever walked in your sleep, Stephen?

Stephen: I don't think so, but I've been known to tell stories in my sleep.

Alice: Oh, fascinating. This is a new development by scientists in the United States that shows that sleepwalking is **genetic** – it's passed on from parent to child. They've been looking at the **genes** of four **generations** of a family who have a lot of sleepwalkers. But before we find out more, I have a question for you, Stephen. What do the letters REM stand for? And it's not just the name of an American pop group....

Stephen: REM – that's something to do with sleep?

Alice: It is – does it stand for:

- a) rapid eye movement
- b) random eye movement or
- c) relative eye movement

Stephen: I'm going to guess a) rapid eye movement.

Alice: As usual, I won't tell you the answer now – we'll find out at the end of the programme! So let's hear more about what it's like to be a sleepwalker. Here's Margaret Brand, a woman who often spends several hours a night sleepwalking:

Insert 1: Margaret Brand

Sometimes I was just back in bed and didn't know that I'd sleepwalked. But I'd wake up in the morning and find that things had been moved or eaten or forgotten – and it had to be me because I was the only person in the flat. Other times I would wake up, usually in the kitchen. I took medication – on one occasion, three 20ml doses of morphine.

Alice: Margaret Brand said that she moves or eats things when she's sleepwalking, and she once took **medication** – drugs - while she was asleep.

Stephen: She says on one occasion, she took **doses** of morphine.

Alice: That's dangerous. There are also other instances when sleepwalking can put the person or other people in danger. Dr Dev Banerjee is a sleep expert at the Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham, in the UK. He says that there have been occasions when sleepwalkers have injured themselves, or even got into their cars to drive:

Insert 2: Dr Dev Banerjee

I think (for) the majority of those that sleepwalk (it) is fairly harmless and quite novel actually, but there are a proportion who do injure themselves, fall down the stairs. I've got someone from Bristol who put his hand through a glass window and severed his radial artery. Not only just injuries, but risks of injuries such as getting out of the house, onto the street. There have been cases, I think in America, where people got into their car and drove down a freeway.

Alice: Dr Dev Banerjee, who says that usually sleepwalking is **harmless** – even novel – unique and quite amusing.

Stephen: What else do scientists know about sleepwalking, Alice?

Alice: They know it's pretty common. One in five children sleepwalk and one in ten adults. And there's a new development by scientists in the United States that shows **it runs in families** – it's genetic.

Stephen: It is passed on from parent to child in a person's genes. Genes control which features identify a person.

Alice: Scientists examined the DNA – the genetic code of a family of four generations who suffer from sleepwalking, and found that they carried a **defective** gene, chromosome 20.

Stephen: A defective gene – that's a gene which has a fault. DNA is the complicated code that makes a human unique and is carried from generation to generation.

Alice: Once the defective gene has been identified it means it could be easier to find treatments and tests for sleepwalkers. People that carry the defective gene have a **50-50** chance of passing it onto their children.

Stephen: 50–50 - that means they have an equal chance of either inheriting the gene or not inheriting it! 50 per cent vs per cent.

Alice: Here's the BBC's Health Reporter, Michelle Roberts:

Insert 2: Michelle Roberts

DNA analysis of the 22 relatives, from the great-grandparents downwards, located the chromosome where the fault lies. Sleepwalkers with these genes on chromosome 20, had a 50-50 chance of passing them onto their children. More work is needed to see if the discovery will explain all cases of sleepwalking, but in the meantime, the researchers say it should help them to develop tests and treatments.

Alice: The BBC's Health Reporter, Michelle Roberts, who says more work is needed to see if the discovery of the sleepwalking gene will help explain all cases of sleepwalking. Well, that's all we have time for today, Stephen – but before we go, what did you think about REM?

Stephen: I guessed that it stands for 'rapid eye movement'.

Alice: And you're right. It's the stage of sleep where your eyes move around a lot – and it's about 20-25% of your total sleep apparently.

Stephen: Well, don't say you don't learn anything new on 6 Minute English!

Alice: Exactly, Stephen. And before we go, because you did so well answering the question, would you mind reading some of the words and phrases we've heard today?

Stephen: Yes of course:

- sleepwalk
- genetic
- genes
- doses of medication
- harmless

it runs in families

generations

defective

50-50

Alice: Thanks so much for that, Stephen. We hope you'll join us next time on "6 Minute English".

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

sleepwalk	do things while asleep, e.g. walk around
genetic	inherited; a feature that someone was born with that was passed on by their parents or grandparents
genes	parts of living cells which carry information about physical characteristics, e.g. a person's appearance and health
doses of medication	specific amounts of medicines taken at regular times, as instructed by a doctor
harmless	not dangerous
it runs in families	it is a feature or condition that affects several people who are related
generations	here, members of a family who are directly related through their parents, grandparents, great grandparents etc
defective	faulty, imperfect
50-50	two equal possibilities

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