



WHAT IS OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA?

Obstructive Sleep Apnea is when a person stops breathing during sleep because his or her airway collapses and prevents air from getting into the lungs.

WHAT CAUSES THE AIRWAY TO COLLAPSE DURING SLEEP?

Several factors that can contribute to airway collapses are:

- Extra tissue in the back of the throat, such as large tonsils or uvula
- A decrease in the tone of the muscles holding the airway open
- Nasal obstruction
- Certain jaw or facial structures or attributes, such as recessed chin

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE OSA?

Statistics reveal that:

- 4 in 100 middle-aged men have OSA
- 2 in 100 middle-aged women has OSA
- Most OSA sufferers remain undiagnosed and untreated

SYMPTOMS

There are some easy-to-identify signs and symptoms associated with OSA:

- Do you snore?
- Do you choke or gasp for breath while you sleep?
- Has anyone told you that you stop breathing during sleep?
- Do you feel tired or fatigued after you sleep?
- Has your weight changed in the last 5 years?
- Have you ever nodded off or fallen asleep while driving a vehicle?

If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, you may suffer from OSA.

WHAT HAPPENS IF OSA IS NOT TREATED?

People who do not seek diagnosis and effective treatment for OSA can be at increased risk for:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Fatigue-related motor vehicle and work accidents
- Decreased quality of life

WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR OSA?

The most common treatment is CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure), pronounced see-PAP. CPAP equipment treats OSA by providing a gentle flow of positive-pressure air through a nasal mask to keep the airway open during sleep

With CPAP therapy:

- Breathing becomes regular and snoring stops
- Oxygen level in the blood becomes normal
- Restful sleep is restored
- Quality of life is improved
- Risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and vehicular or work accidents is reduced
- Less common treatments include surgery and oral appliances. These treatments may be effective in certain individuals.

All treatments should include lifestyle modifications such as: weight loss (if needed), exercise, and sufficient hours of sleep and avoidance of alcohol, sedatives, hypnotics, and tobacco.

Treatment of sleep apnea requires commitment to using the therapy regularly is the greatest benefits are to be recognized. Therapy is often more successful when you understand the disorder and the importance of regularly using the prescribed treatment. The more you know about your disorder, the easier it will be to discuss with your doctor any problems you may experience.

L-104 (6.18)