



FAQ's Sleep Apnea



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WHAT IS SLEEPAPNEA?

Sleep apnea is a disorder characterized by a reduction or pause of breathing (airflow) during sleep. (An apnea occurs when a person stops breathing for 10 seconds or more. If you stop breathing completely or take less than 25% of a normal breath for a period that lasts 10 seconds or more, this is apnea).

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF SLEEP APNEA?

1. Central Sleep Apnea (CSA) – occurs when the brain does not send the signal to the muscles to take a breath, and there is no muscular effort to take a breath.
 2. Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) – occurs when the brain sends the signal to the muscles and the muscles make an effort to take a breath, but they are unsuccessful because the airway becomes obstructed and prevents an adequate flow of air.
 3. Mixed Sleep Apnea – occurs when there is both central sleep apnea and obstructive sleep apnea.
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WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR SLEEP APNEA?

- Male gender
 - Being overweight
 - Being over the age of forty
 - Having a large neck size (17” or greater in men and 16” or greater in women)
 - Having large tonsils, a large tongue, or a small jaw bone
 - Having a family history of sleep apnea
 - Nasal obstruction due to a deviated septum, allergies, or sinus problems
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WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SLEEP APNEA?

If left untreated, sleep apnea can result in a growing number of health problems including:

- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Heart failure, irregular heart beats, and heart attacks
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Worsening of ADHD

In addition, untreated sleep apnea may be responsible for poor performance in everyday activities, such as at work and school, motor vehicle crashes, as well as academic underachievement in children and adolescents.

WHAT ARE SLEEP APNEA SYMPTOMS?

- Waking up with a very sore and/or dry throat
 - Loud snoring
 - Occasionally waking up with a choking or gasping sensation
 - Sleepiness or lack of energy during the day
 - Sleepiness while driving
 - Morning headaches
 - Restless sleep
 - Forgetfulness, mood changes, and a decreased interest in sex
 - Recurrent awakenings or insomnia
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WHAT ARE SLEEP APNEA TESTS?

Polysomnogram – or sleep study – is a multiple component test that electronically transmits and records specific physical activities while you sleep. The recordings are analyzed by a qualified sleep specialist to determine whether or not you have sleep apnea or another type of sleep disorder.

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENTS FOR SLEEP APNEA?

Behavioral Modifications – some conservative approaches for mild cases of sleep apnea may include:

- Losing weight
- Avoiding alcohol and sleeping pills
- Changing sleep positions to promote regular breathing
- Stop smoking – smoking can increase the swelling in the upper airway which may worsen both snoring and apnea
- Avoid sleeping on your back

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) – is a treatment in which a mask is worn over the nose and/or mouth while you sleep. The mask is hooked up to a machine that delivers a continuous flow of air into the nostrils. The positive pressure from air flowing into the nostrils helps keep the airways open so that breathing is not impaired. **CPAP is considered by many experts to be the most effective treatment for sleep apnea.**

Dental Devices – can be made that help keep the airway open during sleep.

Surgery – if you have a deviated nasal septum, markedly enlarged tonsils, or a small lower jaw with an overbite causing the throat to be abnormally narrow, surgery may be needed to correct sleep apnea. The most commonly performed surgical procedures for sleep apnea include:

- **Nasal surgery:** - correction of nasal obstruction such as a deviated septum
- **Uvulopalatopharyngoplasty (UPPP):** a procedure that removes soft tissue on the back of the throat and palate, increasing the width of the airway at the throat opening.
- **Mandibular maxillar advancement surgery:** invasive surgery to correct certain facial abnormalities or throat obstruction that contributes to sleep apnea.