



Sleep Apnea

What is Sleep Apnea?

- A condition marked by abnormal breathing during sleep with multiple extended pauses in breath reducing the quality of sleep and the body's supply of oxygen, leading to potentially serious health consequences.

How Common Is Sleep Apnea?

- Central sleep apnea affects approximately 9% of adults over the age of 40.
- More frequent in men than in women.

What Is Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)?

When the airway at the back of the throat becomes physically blocked causing temporary lapses in breath.

Symptoms connected to obstructive sleep apnea (OSA):

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| • Snoring-
Loud involving gasping, choking, or snorting causing to briefly wake | • Disrupted breathing-
Respiration which becomes labored or even stops briefly |
| • Sore throat/dry mouth-
Morning sore throat or dry mouth | • Excessive daytime sleepiness or drowsiness |
| • Nocturia-
Frequent need to wake up to urinate | • Morning headaches |
| | • Irritability |
| | • Limited attention span/difficulty thinking clearly |

Symptoms arise due to poor sleep and decreased oxygen levels as the result of interrupted breathing.

Risk factors of blockage and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA):

Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when a person's airway becomes blocked during sleep.

Risk factors have been found to increase the risk of blockage and OSA:

- **Anatomical characteristics**-The size and positioning your neck, jaw, tongue, tonsils, and other tissue near the back of your throat can directly affect airflow.
- **Obesity**-Weight is the leading cause of OSA and may be an underlying risk factor in up to 60% of cases. Obesity contributes to anatomical narrowing of the airway. A 10% increase in weight can equate to a six-fold increase in OSA risk.
- **Use of sedatives, including alcohol**-Sedative medications and drugs can cause tissue in the throat to relax, making airway obstruction easier. Pain medicines like opioids can also interfere with this normal process of breathing.
- **Family history**-Having one or more close relatives with OSA are more likely to develop OSA themselves.
- **Cigarette smoking**-Smokers have OSA at a higher rate than people who don't smoke.
- **Sleeping on your back**-Makes it easier for tissue to collapse around the airway causing blockages.
- **Nasal congestion**-Breathing through the nose is reduced because of congestion are more likely to experience OSA.
- **Hormone abnormalities**-Hypothyroidism (*under-active thyroid*) and acromegaly (*excess growth hormone*) may increase the risk of OSA by causing swelling of tissue near the airway and/or contributing to a person's risk of obesity.

Health Risks of Sleep Apnea

- Leads to sleep deprivation from frequent nightly interruptions and poor overall sleep.
- Diverse health consequences that affect a person physically, mentally, and emotionally .
- Untreated sleep apnea raises dangers for cardiovascular issues including high blood pressure, heart attack, heart disease, and stroke due to reduced oxygen levels.

Treatments

- Work with your healthcare provider to find the root cause of your sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is difficult to treat without understanding the root cause.
- Lifestyle changes-Lose weight, reduce use of sedatives, and sleep on your side.
- CPAP machine used nightly.
- Mouth devices to move jaw forward and open airway at night.
- Monitor for other chronic diseases like hypertension, elevated cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes.