

# Fast Facts

## Questions and Answers About Obstructive Sleep Apnea

### What is Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)?

- ◆ Obstructive Sleep Apnea is when a person stops breathing repeatedly during sleep
- ◆ Breathing stops because the airway collapses and prevents air from getting into the lungs
- ◆ Sleep patterns are disrupted, resulting in excessive sleepiness or fatigue during the day

### What causes the airway to collapse during sleep?

- ◆ Extra tissue in the back of the airway such as large tonsils
- ◆ Decrease in the tone of the muscles holding the airway open
- ◆ The tongue falling back and closing off the airway

### How many people have Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

- ◆ 4 in 100 middle-aged men and 2 in 100 middle-aged women have Obstructive Sleep Apnea
- ◆ Most OSA sufferers remain undiagnosed and untreated
- ◆ Obstructive Sleep Apnea is as common as adult asthma

### What happens if Obstructive Sleep Apnea is not treated?

Possible increased risk for:

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

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA?**  
**If you or someone you know snores regularly and has one or more of the following symptoms, it may be Obstructive Sleep Apnea. Check the following that apply:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snoring, interrupted by pauses in breathing    | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor judgment or concentration | <input type="checkbox"/> Large neck size (>17" in men; >16" in women) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gasping or choking during sleep                | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded airway                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restless sleep                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Memory loss                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Morning headache                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive sleepiness or fatigue during the day | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual dysfunction                           |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent urination at night                  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Obesity                        |   |

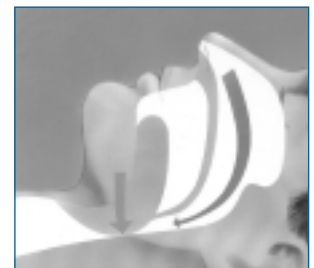
#### Normal Breathing

- Airway is open
- Air flows freely to lungs



#### Obstructive Sleep Apnea

- Airway collapses
- Blocked air flow



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### What should you do if you suspect you may have Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

- ◆ See your doctor; evaluation by a doctor specializing in sleep disorders is recommended.
- ◆ Have a sleep study done; a sleep study can provide the doctor with information about how you sleep and breathe. This information will help the doctor to determine your diagnosis and treatment options.

### What is the treatment for Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

The most common treatment is:

- ◆ **CPAP** (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure), pronounced “see-PAP.” Other less common treatments include surgery and oral appliances, which may be effective in certain individuals.
- ◆ Any treatments should include weight loss if needed, exercise, and avoidance of alcohol, sedatives, and hypnotics.

### How does CPAP therapy work?

**CPAP** treats Obstructive Sleep Apnea by providing a gentle flow of positive-pressure air through a mask to splint the airway open during sleep.

- ◆ Breathing becomes regular
- ◆ Snoring stops
- ◆ Restful sleep is restored
- ◆ Quality of life is improved
- ◆ Risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and motor vehicle and work accidents is reduced

### Obstructive Sleep Apnea is a serious, potentially life-altering and life-threatening condition that is:

- ◆ Easily identified
- ◆ Effectively treated

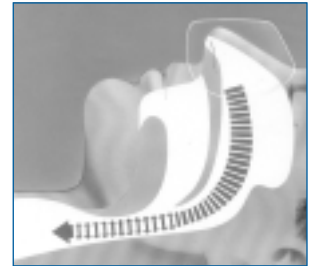
#### Obstructive Sleep Apnea

- Airway collapses
- Blocked air flow



#### CPAP Therapy

- Airway splinted open
- Air flows freely to lungs



*CPAP therapy is safe and effective.*