

## Obstructive Sleep Apnea

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### What is Sleep Apnea?

Loud or irregular snoring, pauses in breathing, excessive sleepiness, and frequent urination at night are all symptoms of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). OSA occurs when breathing stops completely or airflow is severely reduced while sleeping.

During sleep, the muscles in the throat become more relaxed. In OSA, the person's airway collapses. Arousals from sleep occur when the brain tells the body to wake up and breathe. A person with OSA may not remember waking up, but experiences sleepiness during the day because of the repeated disturbances. Aging, excess weight, family history, and narrow airway anatomy all increase the chances of having OSA.

OSA is more common than you might think. More than 18 million American adults have OSA. It is believed that 80% of these adults remain undiagnosed. Failure to treat OSA can lead to greater risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, depression, atrial fibrillation, congestive heart failure, hypertension, as well as work and traffic related accidents.

### A Message From Dr. Whitney By Dr Courtney Whitney, Board Certified Sleep Physician, Owner, Medical Director WSDC

Not surprisingly, it turns out that breathing while you sleep is good for you. While most of us can agree with this simple fact, too many people think that if they are not breathing while asleep, that they would be the first to know. The fact is that individuals struggling to breathe while asleep are often the last to know. Don't wait until your life has been complicated by sleep apnea. Be proactive and have your sleep evaluated before the development of one of many complications such as stroke, heart attack or high blood pressure.

As an internal medicine physician in the late 90's, I discovered that a lot of my patients were not breathing correctly while they slept. Because of this, their sleep was initially fragmented and of declining quality. Over time, unfortunate health issues developed for many. Helping them open their airway while sleeping resulted in better sleep, more energy, and improvements in health.

At one time surgery was the primary intervention for sleep apnea. Over the years, however, it has lost favor due to pain, ineffectiveness and newer more effective alternatives. Almost all of my patients do well with CPAP or BiPAP therapy. Once acclimated, PAP therapy is almost always effective at keeping a patient's airway open while asleep. Newer masks, nasal pillow masks, more effective humidification and recording capability have made this therapy the place to start--and in over 90% of the cases the place to stay. Those with milder cases of sleep apnea or those with trouble acclimating to CPAP also can explore an Oral Appliance/dental device. The Oral Appliance works in 30-70% of the cases, but caution should be practiced when it comes to TMJ joint, teeth or jaw pain and malocclusion of the bite.

In your community you can be tested and treated for sleep apnea right at the local hospital. Discuss with your doctor if you have compromised sleep.

### Do you Think You Might Have A Sleep Disorder?

Yes No

- Do you snore?
- Are you excessively tired during the day?
- Have you been told you stop breathing during sleep?
- Do you have a history of hypertension?
- Is your neck size > 17 inches (male) or > 16 inches (female)?
- Do you wake up to use the bathroom more than twice a night?
- Have you ever fallen asleep while driving?

**Answering "yes" to two (or more) of these questions may be a positive screen for Obstructive Sleep Apnea. Patient should consider talking with their Health Care Provider about a referral for a sleep evaluation.**

### We Can Help!

Discover real solutions to your sleep problems by talking with your Health Care Provider about a sleep study at

**The Whitney Wire**  
 The Quarterly Newsletter From Your Friends at Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC)

**May is Stroke Awareness Month**

There is a strong link between having sleep apnea and risk for stroke. Nearly 70% of people who have suffered a stroke have sleep apnea. Unfortunately, too many of these individuals learn about their sleep apnea after their stroke. While stroke-preventing effects of treating sleep apnea are not yet fully known, one study found that stroke victims who had initiated CPAP therapy for 30 days showed improvements in motor function, wakefulness, and mood. Please take a moment to complete the questionnaire on the front page of this newsletter to find out if you or someone you care about should be evaluated for sleep apnea.

**CPAP Talk** By Susan Gunwall, LPN, WSDC Clinical Coordinator and Director of Operations  
**How Often Should I Replace My CPAP / BiPAP Supplies?**

We are asked this question by patients every day! How long various CPAP supplies should last isn't always apparent to the CPAP user. The table on the right outlines the replacement schedule as put forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This is a guideline only--your replacement level will vary depending on the care of your CPAP accessories and other variables. If you have further questions or supply needs please contact one of our clinical specialists at (877) 844-6150.

Item	HCPCS Code	Replacement Schedule
Full Face Mask	A7030	90 days
Full Face Cushion	A7031	30 days
Nasal Cushion	A7032	30 days
Replacement Pillow	A7033	30 days
CPAP Mask	A7034	90 days
CPAP Headgear	A7035	180 days
CPAP Chinstrap	A7036	180 days
CPAP Tubing	A7037	30 days
Disposable Filter	A7038	30 days
Filters	A7039	180 days
Oral Interface	A7044	90 days
Heated Humidifier	E0562	5 Years
CPAP Machine	E0601	5 Years

**C**ontinuous  
**P**ositive  
**A**irway  
**P**ressure  
 CPAP therapy is a painless, non-invasive way to treat Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)

**Sleep Fact:**

*You or someone you care about can be diagnosed and treated for all sleep disorders right at your local hospital*

**About Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants**

Created by Dr. Courtney Whitney of the Whitney Sleep Center in Plymouth, MN, Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC) serves the sleep medicine needs of hospitals in less populated areas.

Hospitals that partner with WSDC, are able to offer a high quality, AASM accredited sleep medicine program to its patients right at their home town hospital. WSDC diagnoses and treats all 84 known sleep disorders. If you are a patient reading this in a waiting room—your hospital partners with WSDC.

Patients who feel they may have a sleep disorder are encouraged to talk to their healthcare provider about their symptoms. A simple one page screening form can often help determine the need for an overnight sleep study.

Partnering hospitals will soon provide quarterly CPAP clinics where CPAP users can bring their equipment to be inspected and obtain replacement CPAP accessories as needed. If you are in need of CPAP accessories, give us a call at 877-844-6150.

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