

Restless Leg Syndrome

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More Than Sleep Apnea?

While many of us associate the term "sleep disorder" with snoring and sleep apnea, there are actually 84 known sleep disorders. The fact that you are reading this at your hospital or clinic indicates that you can be tested and treated for all of them at your local hospital.

While some sleep disorders require an overnight sleep study to diagnose, there are many that do not. Insomnia, Restless Leg Syndrome, and Periodic Limb Movement Disorder are a few sleep disorders that can be diagnosed without the need for an overnight sleep study. Please see Dr Whitney's article below on Restless Leg Syndrome, and watch for future issues of this quarterly newsletter where we will discuss other sleep disorders and how they affect our overall health.

It is not uncommon for someone to have a combination of sleep disorders. Knowing which one to treat first can be the difference between success and failure. If you are having trouble getting to sleep, staying asleep, or not waking up refreshed, talk with your healthcare provider. If necessary, they can refer you for a consultation locally by a Board Certified Sleep Specialist.

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

Difficulty with initiating or maintaining sleep can sometimes be due to a common sleep disorder called Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS). When described classically, RLS patients report a difficult to describe discomfort in the legs and/or arms. This discomfort is improved by movement but returns upon rest. It most frequently disturbs people in the evening hours while sitting quietly or trying to sleep. RLS frequently runs in families and can occur at any age, but is more common among women and is more prevalent during pregnancy. The symptoms resolve by morning. RLS can be a manifestation of diseased kidneys, iron deficiency, or a result of impaired sleep from disorders such as sleep apnea. In testing for iron deficiency a ferritin level is the most sensitive blood test. Ideally ferritin level should be above 60.

The good news is that it is RLS is treatable with iron supplementation in those patients that have low iron levels, or with resolution of an alternative arousal disorder. RLS can be aggravated or made worse by some medications, including (most commonly) those medications used for the treatment of depression, anxiety and nausea. If you are experiencing restless leg symptoms consult your family physician for exploration of treatment strategies or a consult with a sleep specialist.

Another similar sleep disorder is Periodic Limb Movement Disorder (PLMD). PLMD can not only wear out bedding prematurely, but it can disturb the bed partner and on occasion can wake the sleeper thus reducing their sleep quality. 70% of people with RLS also have PMLD. The treatments for RLS and PMLD are similar.

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 Role Healthy Sleep Plays in Weight Loss

People who are sleep deprived can struggle when it comes to weight loss. This is because when we don't get enough sleep; our bodies produce less Leptin, a hormone that signals to the brain that we are full. Sleep deprived people also produce more of another hormone called Ghrelin, which is an appetite stimulating hormone. When Ghrelin levels are up people feel hungry. If you are not able to get 7-8 hours of quality sleep every night, consider talking to your healthcare provider about your sleep. Most sleep disorders can be diagnosed and treated locally.

CPAP Talk

By Susan Gunwall, LPN, WSDC Clinical Coordinator and Director of Operations

CPAP Supply Replacement

The success of your treatment and the proper functioning of the CPAP machine depends to a large extent on the timely replacement of your CPAP supplies. CPAP supplies include CPAP headgear (including CPAP nasal masks and other apnea masks), CPAP nasal pillows (apnea pillows) and CPAP chin straps.

Masks, headgear, tubing, filters, nasal cushions, nasal pillows and other supplies have a limited lifespan and should be replaced on a regular basis. Even with routine proper cleaning, normal usage results in the breakdown of these supplies and may lead to health problems.

For example, the action of normal facial oils on the silicone may cause the soft mask seal to deteriorate over time and lose its effective seal. This can cause leaks that are irritating and may result in loss of effectiveness. As a result, patients may try to tighten the straps, which can lead to further irritation and soreness of the nose and upper lip. Continual replacement of the CPAP mask will help to minimize this problem.

Another concern is infection prevention. Regular replacement of disposable supplies, along with proper cleaning according to your provider's instructions, will minimize the possibility of germ and bacteria development in the mask and tubing. A potentially dangerous respiratory infection can be avoided by the appropriate cleaning and replacement of consumables of your CPAP device. To learn more about how to properly care for your equipment please contact one of our clinical specialists at (877) 844-6150.

Most insurers follow the Medicare Approved Replacement Schedules detailed below

Mask	1 per 3 months
Nasal Replacement Cushion	2 per month
Pillows Replacement Cushion	2 per month
Full Face Cushion	1 per month
Headgear	1 per 6 months
Chinstrap	1 per 6 months
Tubing	1 per 3 months
Filter, Fine Disposable	2 per month
Filter, Gross Particle Foam	1 per 6 months

Sleep Fact:

CPAP stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. CPAP machines help keep the airway open during sleep

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About Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants

Founded in 2008, Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC) was created to serve patients living in areas where access to comprehensive sleep medicine has not been available. WSDC is owned and operated by Dr Courtney Whitney, who is Board Certified in Sleep Medicine.

Instead of making patients drive to the next larger town, or settling for diagnostic-only sleep testing services, we partner with hospitals in smaller towns to provide the same level of sleep medicine care that would be found in a major metro market.

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