OVERCOMING SLEEP APNEA AND SNORING WITH ORAL APPLIANCE THERAPY

Have A Restful Nights Sleep Unmasked

A guide to understanding sleep apnea and how it can be treated.

Copyright 2015 All Rights Reserved

Author : John W. Reddoch

This book is protected under the uniform copyright act and cannot be reproduced fully or in part with the express written consent of the author and his company.

Sleep Apnea ~ The Not So Silent Killer

That Loud Snoring Could Be A Sign Of A Serious Condition

There has been a lot in the news about sleep apnea and it's harmful effects. We hear of athletes having it, news people and of course the common every day person. However, there is a very scary fact that most people don't know. Eighty percent of those who suffer with sleep apnea are undiagnosed.

We know…You are probably saying wow right about now. But it is the truth. Many of those suffering with sleep apnea don't

know it and they are going to the doctor for things like high blood pressure, weight gain, tiredness and more and they just cannot seem to figure out why they cannot get these problems regulated or managed. It could be because the underlying problem is sleep apnea.

So Just What Is Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea, a disorder that affects about 12 million Americans, is characterized by breath pauses during sleep, which may last for 20 to 30 seconds or more. Sleep apnea episodes usually happen five to 30 times in an hour and may cause sleep disturbances. Snorting, choking, and snoring are typical to people with sleep apnea. It is common in men and older people, although women and children can also be diagnosed with it.

Because of the nature of the condition, people with sleep apnea are normally not aware of their sleeping irregularities. In

fact, it is said that 80 to 90% of people with sleep apnea are undiagnosed. Usually, it is their bed partners who notice their condition.

Types of sleep apnea

There are three types of sleep apnea but two are most common. The most common is called **obstructive sleep apnea** or **OSA** and involves a blocked airway. This blockage can result from over-relaxed throat muscles and tongue, obesity, and facial and bone structure deformities. Once the airway is blocked, breathing stops and the person begins to gasp and snort.

The oxygen level decreases, while carbon dioxide level increases. This then stimulates the brain to normalize the breathing process and prompts the person to wake up and to open the airway by adjusting the tongue and throat muscles. Normal breathing then ensues followed usually by loud snoring. The person, however, may neither remember

being awake for a short time nor be aware of his gasps for air.

The other type is called central sleep apnea, which is caused by the brain's delayed signals to the breathing muscles. Breathing stops and oxygen level begins to drop. Unlike obstructive sleep apnea, central sleep apnea is less common. It is a central nervous system disorder and can result from an injury or disease that involves the brainstem. This can be in the form of stroke and brain tumor, among other things. Though people with central sleep apnea may not typically snore, they may experience shortness of breath.

Both types have different causes, but their effects are the same: low level of oxygen in the brain, poor sleep, excessive daytime sleepiness, fatigue, and even depression. They can also contribute to high blood pressure and heart irregularities when the oxygen reaches a dangerously low level. However, sleep apnea can also be literally disturbing to the bed partner because of the loud

snoring that can cause sleep deprivation.

What to do if you think you might have it?

It would rather be hard for a person to know whether he has sleep apnea, since the condition manifests only during sleep. However, if he suspects to having the condition, especially if he shows the symptoms, he can opt to document his sleeping patterns. For instance, he can ask his bed partner to journal episodes of breath pauses, snoring, choking, or snorting. Or if he sleeps alone, he can videotape himself sleeping and notice if there are irregularities. These observations would help determine if seeing a doctor or a sleep specialist is necessary.

The best and most absolute way of diagnosing sleep apnea is having a sleep study done. These can be done in sleep center with a sleep doctor or you can even get an in home test which many prefer.

Risk Factors And Causes of Obstructive Sleep Apnea

It is during sleep that people are supposedly having the most restorative and restful time in the day. This is not true, however, with people with obstructive sleep apnea. Their apneic events, which happen when there are breath pauses, wake them hundreds of times a night and therefore disturb what should be a continuous, good night's sleep. Obstructive sleep apnea occurs for a number of reasons. However, not all people are aware of them, which makes it hard for the potential patients to seek immediate medical attention. Treatment is necessary, but it starts by knowing the risk factors and causes of obstructive sleep apnea.

Causes

1. Problems in the airway. Obstructive sleep apnea results from an obstruction in the airway, which is usually caused by certain problems in the airway

components. These include the upper and lower jaws, tonsils, soft palate, tongue, and throat muscles.

Some sleep apnea cases involve over-relaxed throat muscles and tongue. When a person sleeps, his muscles normally relax, but when his throat muscles and tongue relax more than normal, it results in narrowing of the airway and causes apneic events.

Enlarged and collapsed soft palate and tonsils also cause obstructive sleep apnea.

2. Structural abnormalities. Anatomical abnormalities contribute to a person's tendency to experiencing obstructive sleep apnea. For instance, the bone structure and shape of the head and neck may affect the size of the airway. A thicker neck may mean narrower airway. Moreover, large tongue and tonsils may also have an effect on the air passage. There are also structural abnormalities in the jaw, nose, and mouth that appear in

people with craniofacial syndromes, making them more prone to obstructive sleep apnea. About 50% of those with Down Syndrome, for example, experience obstructive sleep apnea largely due to decreased muscle tone, comparatively large tongue, and narrower nasopharynx.

3. Obesity. Studies show that obesity has a part to play in the development of obstructive sleep apnea. Fatty cells tend to amass and clog the throat tissue, thereby causing narrowing of the airway. Obese people with sleep apnea are also shown to have more pressure on the airway, which results in more obstruction.

Risk Factors

1. Being Male. Obstructive sleep apnea is more likely to occur among men, although women are predisposed after menopause. Statistics show that one out of 50 middle-aged women has obstructive sleep apnea, compared to one out of 25 among middle-aged men.

2. Old age. Children and adolescents may have obstructive sleep apnea, although those over the age of 65 are twice or thrice more likely to experience it.

3. Use of alcohol, sedatives, and cigarette. Alcohol and sedatives make the muscles more relaxed. Smoking, on the other hand, is said to cause inflammation in the upper airway, thereby making smokers thrice more prone to obstructive sleep apnea.

4. Family history. Sleep apnea seems to run in the family. Therefore, those with family members suffering from obstructive sleep apnea should be more careful for being at a heightened risk.

5. Snoring. Though snoring indicates the presence of obstructive sleep apnea, chronic snoring, in some cases, is said to also cause apneic events. This is because frequent vibration due to snoring may cause the soft palate to stretch, thereby increasing its possibility to collapse. It doesn't mean, however, that

snoring automatically makes a person a candidate for obstructive sleep apnea. Snoring should not be regarded as a sole factor. Other risk factors and causes of obstructive sleep apnea should also be considered.

Key Points about Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is usually considered as chronic or ongoing. It is a condition that often leads to disrupted sleep and could happen in a person for about three or sometimes more nights every single week. The affected person often suddenly moves out of deep sleep and goes into a very light sleep as breathing pauses or becomes very shallow. It is also observed that when the person resumes normal breathing after a sleep apnea attack, he creates a loud choking sound or snort.

It could result to poor quality sleep, making the person tired and restless all day. The condition has been identified by experts as among the main causes of inevitable and excessive daytime

sleepiness. Contrary to what others usually think, sleep apnea is not normal. It could be very risky. If you are diagnosed with the condition, it would be wise and best if you would resort to temporality giving up daytime driving and operating heavy machineries at work.

In many cases, the sleep disorder is undiagnosed. It is because doctors are not able to detect the problem during routine clinic visits. No form of blood, urine, or stool test could point out presence of the problem. It is best if you would discover the condition on your own. You could ask your bed partner or roommates about the snore and noise you make during your sleeping hours. You could take it from there.

It is estimated that in the United States alone, over 12 million of the adult population could be experiencing obstructive sleep apnea. It is also noted that about half of such people have one common condition: they are overweight. Thus, many researchers and experts

could not help their selves but associate or link sleep apnea with excessive weight problem or obesity. This makes the condition a risk factor for any person to develop or suffer from sleep apnea. In the same regard, it is estimated that the ratio of sufferers worldwide are greater.

Race could also be a factor in the occurrence of sleep apnea. Studies highlight that Pacific Islanders, African Americans, and Hispanics are more likely to have sleep apnea. In the same line, it has been found that Caucasians are less likely to suffer from it. The sleeping disorder could also be hereditary. That means that if someone in your immediate family has a history of sleep apnea, chances are higher that you would also develop the problem.

There are several types of sleep apnea. The most common of such kinds is obstructive sleep apnea. It is noted that when the condition happens, the airway collapses or gets blocked during sleep. This blockage may lead to breathing

pauses or shallow breathing. Loud snoring is produced when air squeezes past this blockage.

Obstructive type of sleep apnea is often manifested by overweight people, though experts warn that it could also likely affect anyone. Central sleep apnea is less common. This type is caused by slight malfunction of the brain, specifically the signals sent normally to muscles in the throat, mouth, or airway passages for breathing.

Available treatment could help improve overall health and quality if sleep. Basic options available to treat sleep apnea are mouthpieces, breathing devices, lifestyle adjustments, and surgical operations. You could always have the freedom to choose which treatment option to take based on your comfort, budget, and preference.

Sleep Apnea and Your Spouse

If you have sleep apnea, your spouse does too. We are not talking about

actually physically having it but the suffer along with you especially if you snore. Snoring is the most common sign of sleep apnea and your spouse will be the first to notice.

You may be laughing about it right now but when you have to sleep in another room because you are snoring so loud, it soon is not a laughing matter in more. Many relationships have been effected by loud snoring not to mention the mood swings and bad temper some sleep apnea sufferers have.

CPAP Therapy For Treating Sleep Apnea

The most common breathing device used for sleep apnea treatment is **CPAP** or continuous positive airway pressure. This device is most recommended for people who are suffering from moderate or severe sleep apnea and has been the gold standard for years. In general, the device uses a special mask that is

customized to fit over a person's nose and mouth. It works by gently blowing air into the throat, aiding the entry and passage of air into the airways. Through this action, air is pressed against the airway wall. At the same time, pressure of air is also set so it would be just enough to stop and prevent blockage and narrowing of airways during sleep.

Breathing devices could help stop loud and even minimal snoring. This way, CPAP could be used by people with sleep apnea and those who do not suffer from the condition but are annoying during sleep due to loud snoring. However, be reminded that sleep apnea problems could return when use of CPAP is stopped or when it used incorrectly.

People who prefer CPAP usually are turned off by several requirements. Because CPAP could be complex equipment, there is a need to call a technician to setup, install, and adjust the equipment into the mouth or nose. The technician would need to make specific

adjustments based on the orders of the doctor. After an initial setup session, you may still need to call back the technician so that the device could be appropriately adjusted for best results.

Another setback is the possible side effects of using CPAP. Such unlikely effects include stuffing or drying of the nose, onset of sore eyes, irritation of facial skin, and headaches. If the device is not properly setup, installed, or adjusted, it could cause stomach bloating and unnecessary discomfort. If any of the side effects appear, it is best if the CPAP user would approach a specialist, a nursing staff, or a CPAP technician. Side effects could be reduced or eliminated upon the correction of any error. As for stuffy and runny nose, nasal sprays may provide instant and more effective relief.

To date, there are several types of CPAP masks and machines available in the market. It would be best if you would approach your doctor and tell him your dissatisfaction if you are not comfortable

or happy in using the device. Other treatment options for sleep apnea could be more effective and more comfortable for you. In general, most sleep apnea sufferers start feeling better upon CPAP use for treatment.

Most people just don't like the noise, the hoses, and the feeling that a snake is around their neck. That brings us to a much better option that can literally save your life. It is certainly worth considering especially if it means not letting your sleep apnea go untreated.

Oral Appliance Therapy

How would you like to get your life and a good nights rest back?

People who suffer with sleep apnea are faced with a lot of physical and emotional challenges. Some are overwhelmed with health issues that they just cannot seem to get control of and they wonder why. They put on weight and have to deal with people criticizing them for being overweight and assuming that it is because they eat to much.

They then find out they have sleep apnea and they are prescribed CPAP therapy. They think that it is all going to be better now

until they try and wear it for a week or so. They soon become frustrated with the hoses, the noise and the feeling of being closed in to the point they take it and throw it in the closet or under the bed. Their sleep apnea continues to go untreated and they fall right back into a vicious cycle of health problems and getting no rest.

Your Body Needs Sleep

Science has proven that the body needs sleep for a variety of reasons. To be short and sweet about it, you body needs sleep in order to reboot itself.

When we sleep the body goes through a healing process. It basically refreshes itself. People who don't get enough sleep find themselves fighting a variety of health problems. Sleep apnea keeps your body from reaching the deep sleep your body needs to heal itself.

Here are a few things that good sleep does for you:

It promotes brain health and gives it the opportunity to make certain neuronal

connections
It gives the brain a chance to reorganize data and process newly learned information. That is why many report that after a nap during the day, they are able to be more productive the rest of the day.
It slows your energy consumption and lowers the stress on your cardiovascular system and can lower your blood pressure and heart rate by 20 to 30 percent.
Sleep helps to replace chemicals the body needs and repair muscles
Sleep helps fight depression
Fights memory problems
Helps our immune system reboot and get stronger
Fights fatigue

These are just a few of the reasons our body needs sleep. You can do some research online and find out much more about the benefits of sleep that we can put in this simple guide.

What Is Oral Appliance Therapy?

Oral appliance therapy is simply a custom made device that is fitted to your mouth

and it repositions your jaw slightly forward in order to open your airway and let the air through. As we explained above, most **OSA** is caused by an obstruction in the airway which is typically the tongue or soft pallet falling back and obstructing air flow.

The oral appliance simply repositions the jaw to open the airway. It's simple, comfortable and cost effective. Best of all there are no hoses, electricity, noise or condensation to deal with. It is true freedom device for stopping snoring and treating sleep apnea.

This is not to be confused with the "boil and bites" you see advertised on television or in a local drug store. This is not the same. The kind you see on television are not near as effective are not adjustable like the oral appliance administered by a sleep dentist.

Many patients report getting the best rest they have had in years and many say they have dreamed for the first time in a long time after receiving oral appliance

therapy.

That's it…Oral Appliance Therapy is just that simple and it's effective.

What's Your Next Step

There are two things to be considered. One is if you are diagnosed and the other is if you haven't been diagnosed but think you might have sleep apnea.

You've Been Diagnosed

If you have been diagnosed, then call the office of the dentist you got this book from or look online for a sleep dentist in your area. Set an appointment and be sure to take your sleep study with you in order for them to fully understand how severe your sleep apnea is.

If it has been a while since you had a sleep study, they may recommend you having a current one done in order to be able to treat your sleep apnea in the most optimal way possible.

You Haven't Been Diagnosed But Think You Might Have Sleep Apnea

If you think you might have sleep apnea, let us just go over a few signs and symptoms one more time:

* Loud or chronic snoring
* Choking, snorting or gasping for breath during sleep
* Long pauses in your breathing
* Daytime sleepiness no matter how much time you spend in bed
* You wake up with a dry mouth or a soar throat
* Have morning headaches
* Restless or fitful sleep
* Insomnia or nighttime awakenings
* Frequently going to the bathroom during the night
* Waking up and feeling out of breath
* Forgetfulness and not being able to concentrate
* Moodiness, irritability, depression, changes in temperament

If you are experiencing some or all of these, you could have sleep apnea. Your first step is to contact a certified sleep dentist who can then help you get a sleep study to determine just how severe your sleep apnea may be.

Don't hesitate to take action. Sleep apnea shouldn't be taken lightly.

Have you found this informative? If you have, please contact the doctor who gave you this book to setup a consultation. You will not regret taking that step.

Disclaimer…This book is not intended to replace the medical advice of a doctor or a certified sleep dentist. If you think you have sleep apnea, contact a physician for help.