

SUBURBAN PULMONARY MEDICINE, P.C.

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Sleep Apnea A Patient Guide

What is Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea is a common disorder that affects both children and adults. It is characterized by periods of breathing cessation (apnea) and periods of reduced breathing (hypopnea).

Sleep apnea is a serious sleep disorder that occurs when a person's breathing is interrupted during sleep. People with untreated sleep apnea stop breathing repeatedly during their sleep, sometimes hundreds of times. This means the brain and the rest of the body may not get enough oxygen.

There are two types of sleep apnea:

- Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA): The more common of the two forms of apnea, it is caused by a blockage of the airway, usually when the soft tissue in the back of the throat collapses during sleep.
- Central sleep apnea: Unlike OSA, the airway is not blocked, but the brain fails to signal the muscles to breathe due to instability in the respiratory control center.

Am I at Risk for Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea can affect anyone at any age, even children. Risk factors for sleep apnea include:

- Being male
- Being overweight
- Being over age 40
- Having a large neck size (17 inches or greater in men and 16 inches or greater in women)
- Having large tonsils, a large tongue, or a small jaw bone
- Having a family history of sleep apnea
- Gastroesophageal reflux, or GERD
- Nasal obstruction due to a deviated septum, allergies, or sinus problems

What Are the Effects of Sleep Apnea?

If left untreated, sleep apnea can result in a growing number of health problems, including:

- High blood pressure

- Stroke
- Heart failure, irregular heart beats, and heart attacks
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Worsening of ADHD

In addition, untreated sleep apnea may be responsible for poor performance in everyday activities, such as at work and school, motor vehicle crashes, and academic underachievement in children and adolescents.

What tests are done to diagnose Sleep Apnea?

If you have symptoms of sleep apnea, your doctor may ask you to have a sleep apnea test, called a polysomnogram. This may be done in a sleep disorder center or even at home

A polysomnogram, also known as a sleep study, is a multiple-component test that electronically transmits and records specific physical activities while you sleep. The recordings are analyzed by a qualified sleep specialist to determine whether or not you have sleep apnea or another type of sleep disorder.

If sleep apnea is determined, you may be asked to do further sleep testing in order to determine the best treatment option.

What to Expect During a Sleep Study?

On the night of your sleep study if you are in a sleep center lab, you will be assigned to a private bedroom in the sleep center or hospital. Near the bedroom will be a central monitoring area, where the technicians monitor sleeping patients.

You will be hooked up to equipment that may look uncomfortable. However, most people fall asleep with little difficulty.

Similar, more portable equipment is now available for home testing, especially for less complicated cases or situations.

What Equipment is used for a Sleep Study?

During a sleep study, surface electrodes will be put on your face and scalp and will send recorded electrical signals to the measuring equipment. These signals, which are generated by your brain and muscle activity, are then recorded digitally. Belts will be placed around your chest and abdomen to measure your breathing. A pulse oximeter will be put on your finger to measure the amount of oxygen in your blood.

Are there any other tests that can be done?

- EEG (electroencephalogram) to measure and record brain wave activity.
- EMG (electromyogram) to record muscle activity such as face twitches, teeth grinding, and leg movements, and to determine the presence of REM stage sleep. During REM sleep, intense dreams often occur as the brain undergoes heightened activity.
- EOG (electro-oculogram) to record eye movements. These movements are important in determining the different sleep stages, particularly REM stage sleep.
- ECG (electrocardiogram) to record heart rate and rhythm.
- Nasal airflow sensor to record airflow.
- Snore microphone to record snoring activity.

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MEDICAL FORM FOR SLEEP STUDIES

NAME _____ AGE _____

ORDERING PHYSICIAN _____

HEIGHT _____ WEIGHT _____

Type of study requested: 1) Routine apnea/myoclonas 2) Routine and CPAP studies
3) Parasomnia study 4) CPAP study only 5)BiPAP study only.

Is this a repeat study? Y N

For Obstructive Sleep Apnea patients, **please circle** history of:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Snoring | Hypersomnolence |
| Excessive daytime sleepiness | Non-restorative sleep |
| Witnessed apneas | Other _____ |
| Awakening with gasping, shortness of breath | _____ |

For ALL Patients, **please circle** concurrent illnesses:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Asthma | CAD |
| COPD | Cardiac arrhythmia |
| CHF | Epilepsy |
| HT | Restless Legs |
| Diabetes | Psychiatric Illness (specify) _____ |
| Others _____ | _____ |

Current Medications _____

Please list any other ongoing concerns or potential problems (confusion, extreme obesity)