

COVID-19 AND YOUR SLEEP

Virginia Academy of Sleep Medicine

BACKGROUND

- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, currently designated as a pandemic by the World Health Organization.
- Disease severity varies, ranging from asymptomatic infection to deadly.
- No cures currently exist; treatments have typically been supportive and managing the many complications of the disease.
- Self-quarantine for 14 or more days is typically recommended for people with known or suspected infection; shorter quarantine may be recommended after an exposure.
- No sleep disorders are known to increase your risk of catching, or dying from, COVID-19.
- Patients with sleep disorders often also have conditions that may increase the risk of death in COVID-19 infections (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2521-4>).
- Many governments, including Virginia, have restricted travel and gatherings in an effort to control the spread of the virus, resulting in extended time at home with limited company.
- Some states and localities have experienced increases in infections during “reopening.”



SLEEP DURATION & QUALITY

- The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic consequences have created enormous stresses that affect sleep quality.
- Daily schedules have been thrown into disarray from social distancing efforts.
- Some people may struggle to sleep, while others find themselves sleeping excessively.
- It is important to maintain a set sleep schedule, allowing a consistent amount of time for sleep (i.e., 7-8 hours nightly for adults). Keep your pre-pandemic bedtime routines. Work to get daily exercise and sunlight.
- Contact your or your child's sleep provider if you find that getting too much or too little sleep is affecting your quality of life.

SLEEP LAB OPERATIONS

- Most sleep centers, clinics, and offices temporarily paused operations, based on guidance from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and government restrictions on elective procedures.
- Many sleep labs have started performing studies again, though you may notice some changes designed to ensure your safety.
- Sleep labs are advised to follow CDC recommendations for cleaning between patients, including washing sheets, sterilizing reusable equipment, and wiping down all surfaces; time is given between patients to allow enough air to exchange.
- With appropriate precautions, risks to you are minimal.
- Talk to your or your child's sleep provider about any concerns you may have, and options for diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders.



COVID-19 & POSITIVE AIRWAY PRESSURE

- Positive airway pressure (PAP) therapy is often used to treat obstructive sleep apnea, though may also be used in other conditions such as chronic respiratory failure.
- You should never share your PAP machine or supplies; this is especially important during a respiratory pandemic like COVID-19.
- Distilled water should be used in the humidifier, but other kinds of water can be substituted if distilled water is unavailable (<https://aasm.org/coronavirus-covid-19-faqs-cpap-sleep-apnea-patients/>).
- If you become infected with COVID-19, contact your sleep provider for instructions regarding PAP therapy. You should sleep in separate rooms from unaffected housemates.
- Seek medical attention if you or your child develop shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face, or other concerns (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html#seek-medical-attention>).