

## Headaches and Sleep

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### Even the Pros Need Help

*By Jim Dunn, Director of Business Development for Whitney Sleep*

Back in 2010, NFL Wide Receiver Percy Harvin (then, of the MN Vikings), was diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea. As a casual Minnesota Vikings fan, I cannot say that this diagnosis came as a surprise to me. You see, during Harvin's tenure as a Viking, he had missed several practices and three games--because of migraine headaches. Some of the finest sports physicians in the world tried to solve Harvin's migraines with no success. It was only when Harvin was hospitalized after he collapsed during a practice that his sleep was identified as a potential culprit. While in the hospital, Doctors noticed that Harvin's heart rate was irregular during sleep to the point where it actually would stop beating for seconds at a time. Irregular heart rate is common with sleep disordered breathing, and is a serious indication that a person may have sleep apnea. After a sleep study returned a diagnosis of Obstructive Sleep Apnea, Harvin began using CPAP therapy, and was taken off his migraine medication. He even won a Super Bowl in 2014 as a member of the Seattle Seahawks.

Earlier in this article I mentioned that Harvin's diagnosis was not a surprise. I said that because up until around that time, my wife had been a long time migraine sufferer—seeing specialist after specialist over the years to find the right treatment plan. After working with Dr Whitney, he determined that her mild sleep apnea could be the reason for her headaches. Sure enough, after going on CPAP therapy, her migraines subsided to the point where it became very rare for her have any headaches at all. Many of us know someone who has suffered chronic headaches (maybe it is you). If so, please answer the questions at the bottom of this page and talk with your healthcare provider about your answers to see if an undiagnosed sleep disorder could be standing between you and relief from headaches.

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

When I began practicing sleep medicine, it was evident to me that addressing a patient's obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) would have a significant impact on that patient's overall health profile. I knew that I would see improvements in sleep quality and reduction in daytime sleepiness. The literature told me I would also see improvements in heart health and a reduction in heart-related health problems. But at first, I had no idea that this would impact patients who suffer from headaches. As mentioned above, Percy Harvin's recent treatment for OSA promises to increase the awareness of how headaches and sleep apnea are linked. It will be exciting to see if this facilitates a more comprehensive evaluation of patients with headaches. It's been my experience that headaches improve or resolve with the treatment of sleep apnea. I am uncertain why headaches and sleep apnea are linked, but I hope this article and information on celebrities such as Harvin will help with the diagnosis and treatment of OSA. I encourage physicians and patients to seek screening and evaluation for OSA if headaches are a concern. In the event that sleep-disordered breathing is not felt to be at play but some uncertainty remains, an overnight oximetry is a reasonable and inexpensive screening tool. In those with a history suggestive of sleep-disordered breathing, an overnight sleep study is warranted. If you have chronic headaches, be sure to answer the seven questions below and discuss your findings with your healthcare provider

### 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 healthcare provider about a referral for a sleep evaluation or sleep study at your local hospital.**

### We Can Help!

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

# Headaches and Sleep

## Deer Camp is Just Around the Corner

You might be surprised how many patients come to us after hunting season. Often, their spouse and family have told them for years that they snore and stop breathing when they sleep. Just as often, they may feel tired during the day and nod off at the drop of a hat. No matter what the symptoms are—they are usually displayed loud (no pun intended) and clear in the close confines of a hunting shack. If you are the offending snorer that has kept your fellow hunters from getting good sleep—you very likely heard about it the next morning, and afternoon, and evening. Instead of dealing with the ridicule another year, you can do something about it. Take the short screener on the back of this page and tell your healthcare provider if you stop breathing when you sleep. You may be referred for a sleep study at your local hospital that can determine how your snoring is affecting your overall health, which may increase your odds of being around for many more deer camps. The leaves have not started turning yet, which means there is still time to do something about your sleep before the 2015 season begins.

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

Item	HPCPS 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

### How often do I need new supplies?

This is a question we hear every day. Some people stop using their CPAP just because their mask no longer seals correctly or their tubing has sprung a leak. The table to the left shows the frequency that Medicare and many insurers allow for supply replacement. For further questions or supply needs please contact one of our clinical specialists at (877) 844-6150. We can schedule a time to meet with you at your local hospital to evaluate your equipment and supply needs.

## Continuous Positive Airway

## Pressure

CPAP therapy uses pressurized air to keep the airway open during sleep. It is a non-invasive and very effective way to treat Obstructive Sleep Apnea

**Sleep Fact:**  
*Man is the only mammal that willingly delays sleep.*

[sleepfoundation.org](http://sleepfoundation.org)



## 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.

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