

The Whitney Wire

The Quarterly Newsletter From Your Friends At Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC)
January, 2013

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Want to Lose Big?

Those familiar with the NBC television show *The Biggest Loser* know that contestants win a trip to a ranch where they compete to lose the largest percentage of body weight. They adhere to strict meal plans and a vigorous exercise program—but that's not all.

Since the show's seventh season, sleep studies have been added to the contestants' pre-show medical work-ups, and treatment for those with sleep apnea has been provided. The show's Dr's talk of four components in losing weight: diet, exercise, psychology AND sleep optimization.

People who are sleep deprived can have difficulty regulating hormones that control appetite, metabolism, and blood sugars (see Dr Whitney's message below). On top of that, they are often so tired during the day that exercise is out of the question. Many *Biggest Loser* contestants credit the treatment of their sleep disorder with giving them the energy and motivation to finish their workouts as well as an improved outlook toward a healthy lifestyle.

Obesity and Sleep

A Message From Dr. Whitney

By Dr Courtney Whitney, Board Certified Sleep Physician, Owner, Medical Director WSDC

When it comes to our health, the evidence is strong that obesity often results in poor outcomes. Not only can obesity wreak havoc on our musculoskeletal system but it also contributes to vascular disease, diabetes and compromises in breathing while awake and asleep. Increased girth can also reduce lung capacity and can restrict airflow while asleep, resulting in suboptimal rest that our body so dearly needs.

In addition to having a 2-3 times greater risk for heart attack or stroke, those with obstructive sleep apnea often struggle with weight and can have a tougher time losing weight. This is because when we don't get enough sleep; our bodies produce less of a hormone called leptin, which 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. Add this to the daytime fatigue experienced by those who are sleep deprived, and one can see how poor sleep is associated with obesity. My patients who have used therapy to manage their sleep apnea often tell me that they more successful in their weight loss endeavors, and many see an improvement in their headaches, blood pressure, acid reflux and blood sugars.

With weight loss, as we see a reduction in the compromised lung function and airway obstruction, we also see our sleep and health improve. Unfortunately for patients our healthcare system does not have the cure for obesity. Fortunately, we are learning and developing new strategies. If you are overweight I wish you luck in your pursuit of weight loss, and along the way I encourage you to consider an evaluation of your breathing during sleep. A good place to start is with the questions below this article. Discuss your answers with your local healthcare provider and they will provide the necessary direction. Keep in mind that while most people with sleep apnea snore and many are overweight, not all people with sleep apnea are obese.

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

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The Quarterly Newsletter From Your Friends at Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC)

Resolve to Get More Sleep

For some reason, Americans tend to view positively someone who has the ability to “pull an all nighter.” Somewhere along the line, the ability to function with less sleep has become admired. Most experts agree that an adult should get around 7 to 8 hours of sleep nightly, but Americans are getting less and less sleep each year (national average in 2009 was 6.7 hours per week night). There is plenty of evidence to suggest that those who are sleep deprived (or who suffer from sleep disordered breathing) are at higher risk for high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, diabetes, auto accidents and more. Do yourself and the ones you care about a big favor in 2013, by striving to get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. Who knows, you may find yourself with more energy to tackle your other New Year’s Resolutions!

CPAP Talk By Susan Gunwall, LPN, WSDC Clinical Coordinator and Director of Operations **Benefits of CPAP Therapy**

Many CPAP users report feeling much better after their very first night of CPAP therapy. Partners of CPAP users often report an immediate end to the snoring and thrashing that had been disturbing their own nightly sleep as well as their bedmates. With continued use, CPAP therapy enhances quality of life and reduces or eliminates Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) health risks.

Generally, the more severe the OSA, the more dramatic the improvement with CPAP therapy. People, who have less severe OSA, or a fainter awareness of their symptoms, may find that their improvement is less dramatic but still rewarding. Many CPAP users are delighted by the benefits of good sleep which include: improved energy and mood, renewed interests in work, hobbies and social activities. Many are able for the first time to succeed with their weight-loss, fitness, or quit smoking plans. Some are even able to reduce their dosages of blood pressure or heart medications after consulting their doctors.

In most cases, CPAP is needed for the rest of the user’s life to keep OSA under control. Unless the OSA is eliminated by lifestyle changes (like significant weight loss) or other treatments, its symptoms and health risks will return if CPAP therapy is stopped. A repeat sleep study is needed to determine whether OSA has been eliminated by other measures.

C o n t i n u o u s P o s i t i v e A i r w a y P r e s s u r e

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:

You or someone you care about can be diagnosed and treated for sleep disorders at your local hospital

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About Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants

Created by Dr. Courtney Whitney of the Whitney Sleep Center in Plymouth, MN, Whitney Sleep Diagnostics & Consultants (WSDC) serves the sleep medicine needs of hospitals in less populated areas.

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

Partnering hospitals will soon provide CPAP clinics where CPAP users can bring their equipment to be inspected and obtain replacement CPAP accessories as needed. If you are in need of CPAP accessories, give us a call at 877-844-6150.