

Sleep Apnea and the Heart

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What is Apnea?

Apnea is literally defined as "no breath." It is a transient cessation of breathing during sleep that lasts for at least 10 seconds--*some last over 60 seconds*. This results in a lack of air movement into the lungs and can cause oxygen levels in the blood to drop. Apnea may be due to obstruction of the upper airway (Obstructive Sleep Apnea or OSA) or a failure of the brain to initiate a breath (Central Sleep Apnea). People with OSA can stop breathing anywhere from 5 times (mild) to more than 30 times (severe) an HOUR while asleep. And to think that some wonder why they are tired when they wake up in the morning.

Apneas are particularly hard on the heart and are associated with an increased risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, atrial fibrillation, arrhythmia, and congestive heart failure. When a person stops breathing during sleep, their heart rate drops along with the oxygen level in their blood. The longer the apnea, the further these levels drop. When the person arouses from the apnea (the snort, grunt, gasp), the heart has to work harder than normal to bring these levels back to normal. This can happen hundreds of times per night and over time can take a heavy toll on the heart muscle and circulatory system.

A Message From Dr. Whitney

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

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the US. Most people are aware of this and can list the risk factors for heart disease, which include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, family history and smoking. Over the course of the last 10 years, growing evidence suggests that sleep apnea should also be included on this list. This evidence shows that not only is sleep apnea common amongst those with heart disease, but it may also play a role in the cause.

To reduce your risk of heart disease, it is imperative that you control those factors listed above and be treated for sleep apnea if present. Did you know that if you snore there is a 60% chance you have sleep apnea? The likelihood is much higher if you have diabetes, high blood pressure and/or are overweight. The most effective treatment is CPAP, but other options may work as well.

Whitney Sleep specializes in both the diagnosis and treatment of all sleep disorders. Your community hospital has contracted with us to perform this service, and we are honored to have this opportunity. Our goal is to help you avoid heart issues through early detection and management of sleep apnea. Talk to your health care provider or us about how you can be screened for a possible sleep disorder. It is important for your health and your sleep quality.

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

Sleep Apnea and the Heart

May is Stroke Awareness Month

The connection between untreated Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) can no longer be ignored. Stroke is the second leading cause of death worldwide, and according to the National Health Institute, men with moderate to severe sleep apnea are nearly three times more likely to have a stroke than men without sleep apnea or with mild sleep apnea. Over 18 million Americans suffer from OSA. Unfortunately many of them remain undiagnosed. If you think you or a loved one may be at risk, please utilize the seven question screener on the other side of this newsletter. If you answer yes to two or more questions, consider talking with your healthcare provider about a referral for a sleep study. You can receive diagnosis and treatment for your sleep disorder at your local hospital.

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

We hear all too often about patients who have been diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), who were issued a CPAP and mask without options as to the style and/or size of their mask. Very few patients will tolerate a mask that does not seal properly, and unfortunately many will stop using CPAP altogether due to the mask leak.

The good news is that your hospital partners with Whitney Sleep who can meet with you to evaluate your CPAP equipment. This chart gives an idea of supply replacement schedule that Medicare supports.

No referral is needed for us to inspect your CPAP, just call 877-844-6150 to schedule an appointment with one of our CPAP Specialists.

Struggling with Therapy?

Item	HCPSC 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
Non disposable Filters	A7039	180 days
Oral Interface	A7044	90 days
Heated Humidifier	E0562	5 Years
CPAP Machine	E0601	5 Years

CPAP: Continuous Positive Airway Pressure

CPAP uses pressurized air to help keep a person's airway open during sleep. It is painless, adjustable, and measurable..

Sleep Fact:

A poorly fitting or worn out mask seal can be the difference between success and failure on CPAP therapy.



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 a patient 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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*We Can Help You With Your
CPAP Supplies*