

Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Fast Facts for health care professionals

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What is Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)?

- OSA is a condition in which a person stops breathing repeatedly during sleep.
- Breathing stops because the airway collapses and prevents air from getting into the lungs.
- Sleep patterns are disrupted, resulting in excessive sleepiness or fatigue during the day.

How many people have OSA?

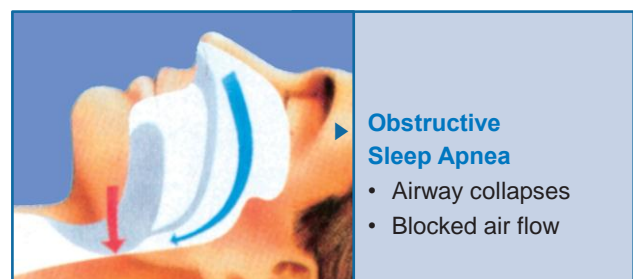
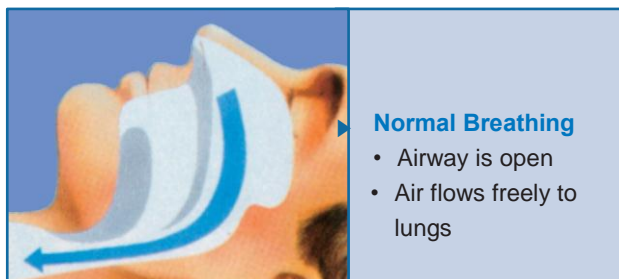
- Four percent of middle-aged men and two percent of middle-aged women have OSA, totaling 20 million adults in the United States.
- Most OSA sufferers remain undiagnosed and untreated.
- OSA is as common as adult asthma.

What causes the airway to collapse during sleep?

- Extra tissue in the back of the airway such as large tonsils.
- Decrease in the tone of the muscles holding the airway open.
- The tongue falling back and closing off the airway.

What should you do if you suspect your patient may have Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

- You should request a sleep diagnostic test to confirm a sleep disorder. Additionally, a consultation to a Boarded Sleep Specialist may be appropriate.
- A sleep study can provide you with information about how your patient sleeps and breathes. This information will help you determine a diagnosis and treatment options.



Obstructive Sleep Apnea

What happens if Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is not treated?

Possible increased risk for:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease and heart attack
- Stroke
- Fatigue-related motor vehicle and work accidents
- Decreased quality of life

What treatments are there for my patients with OSA?

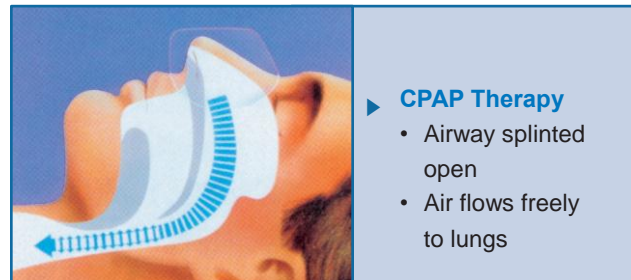
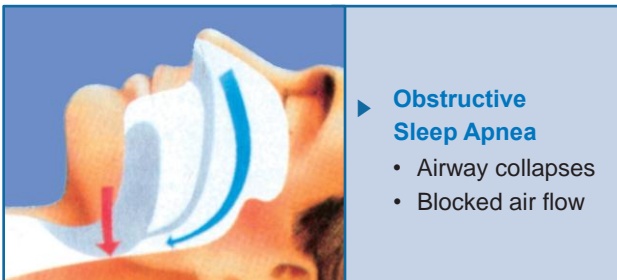
- The most common treatment is Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP – pronounced “see-PAP”) therapy.
- Other less common treatments include surgery and oral appliances, which may be effective in certain patients.
- Any treatments should include weight loss (if needed), exercise, and avoidance of alcohol, sedatives, and hypnotics.

How does CPAP therapy work?

CPAP treats OSA by providing a gentle flow of positive-pressure air through a mask to splint the airway open during sleep. For patients using CPAP:

- Breathing becomes regular
- Snoring stops
- Restful sleep is restored
- Quality of life is improved
- Risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and motor vehicle and work accidents is reduced

OSA is a serious and potentially life-altering health issue that may lead to life-threatening conditions. But it is easily identified and can be effectively treated.



What are the signs and symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea?

If your patient snores regularly and has one or more of the following symptoms, it may be OSA.

Check the following that apply:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snoring, interrupted by pauses in breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Large neck size (greater than 17" in men; greater than 16" in women) | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor judgment or concentration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gasping or choking during sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> Crowded airway | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restless sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> Morning headache | <input type="checkbox"/> Memory loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive sleepiness or fatigue during the day | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual dysfunction | <input type="checkbox"/> High blood pressure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent urination at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Obesity |