

Do I Need a Sleep Study?

- **If you suspect you may have some sleep related problems - you should consult your doctor- About sleep disorder breathing as Sleep Apnea is a serious and potentially fatal medical condition. If you feel you may suffer from this type of disorder you should be tested as soon as possible.**
- **There are Sleep Questionnaires (BERLIN OR STOP/BANG) which can help you determine if you suffer from symptoms. Bring this questionnaire with you to a physician to help evaluate your condition and possible symptoms of sleep apnea.**
- **If your physician determines a sleep study is necessary a Polysomnogram, or Sleep Study will be conducted which measures many key metrics while you sleep. These metrics are used to determine if you have Sleep Apnea or a number of other sleep related conditions such as central sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome.**

Lifestyle and home remedies

In many cases, self-care may be the most appropriate way for you to deal with obstructive sleep apnea and possibly central sleep apnea. Try these tips:

- **Lose excess weight.** Even a slight loss in excess weight may help relieve constriction of your throat. Sleep apnea may be cured in some cases by a return to a healthy weight. If you don't already have a weight-loss program, talk to your doctor about the best course of action for weight loss.
- **Exercise.** Getting 30 minutes of moderate activity, such as a brisk walk, most days of the week may help ease obstructive sleep apnea symptoms.
- **Avoid alcohol and certain medications** such as tranquilizers and sleeping pills. These relax the muscles in the back of your throat, interfering with breathing.
- **Sleep on your side or abdomen rather than on your back.** Sleeping on your back can cause your tongue and soft palate to rest against the back of your throat and block your airway. To prevent sleeping on your back, try sewing a tennis ball in the back of your pajama top.
- **Keep your nasal passages open at night.** Use a saline nasal spray to help keep your nasal passages open. Talk to your doctor about using any nasal decongestants or antihistamines because these medications are generally recommended only for short-term use.
- **Stop smoking, if you're a smoker.** Smoking worsens obstructive sleep apnea.

Risk factors— Obstructive sleep apnea can affect anyone.

Even children can have sleep apnea.

But certain factors put you at increased risk:

Excess weight. Fat deposits around your upper airway may obstruct your breathing. However, not everyone who has sleep apnea is overweight. Thin people develop this disorder, too.

Neck circumference. People with a thicker neck may have a narrower airway.

A narrowed airway. You may have inherited a naturally narrow throat. Or, your tonsils or adenoids may become enlarged, which can block your airway.

Being male. Men are twice as likely to have sleep apnea. However, women increase their risk if they're overweight, and their risk also appears to rise after menopause.

Being older. Sleep apnea occurs significantly more often in adults older than 60.

Family history. If you have family members with sleep apnea, you may be at increased risk.

Race. In people under 35 years old, blacks are more likely to have obstructive sleep apnea.

Use of alcohol, sedatives or tranquilizers. These substances relax the muscles in your throat.

Smoking. Smokers are three times more likely to have obstructive sleep apnea than are people who've never smoked. Smoking may increase the amount of inflammation and fluid retention in the upper airway. This risk likely drops after you quit smoking.

Nasal congestion. If you have difficulty breathing through your nose — whether it's from an anatomical problem or allergies — you're more likely to develop obstructive sleep apnea

If you or your partner suspects that you have sleep apnea, you'll probably first see your primary care doctor. However, in some cases when you call to set up an appointment, you may be referred to a sleep specialist.

