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Authors Note

This eBook ***Treatment of Sleep Apnea*** is intended for informational purposes only. It should not be used as, or in place of, professional medical advice. Before beginning any treatment for Sleep Apnea or Snoring, please consult a doctor for a proper diagnosis and remedy.

If you are having problems sleeping, you are not alone. There are several types of sleep disorders as listed below. This book is going to concentrate primarily on Sleep Apnea with a side on [Snoring](#). However, I do feel it is important to be aware of the other sleep disorders that plague many – both in adults as well as children.

At the end of this book, I have included some additional [Resources](#) should you want additional information. In addition, you may want to check out my blog that contains a number of articles on this subject.

www.AdultSleepApnea.com

Dalyn Baker



Sleep Apnea Myths & Facts

To become fully aware of recognizing and treating Sleep Apnea, one must be aware of the myths and facts attributed to this disorder. My research came up with the following:

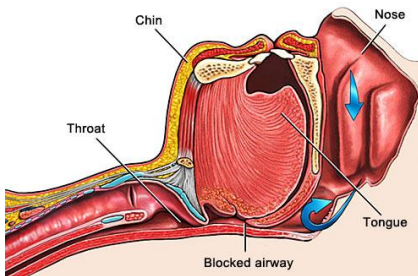
Sleep Apnea Is Just Snoring

Although snoring can be a sign of sleep apnea, there's a big difference between the two. People with sleep apnea actually stop breathing up to 400 times throughout the night. These interruptions last 10 to 30 seconds and are often followed by a snort when breathing resumes. This breaks your sleep cycle and can leave you tired during the day.



Sleep Apnea Is Not Dangerous

Myth. All those interruptions in sleep take a toll on the body and mind. Untreated sleep apnea has been linked to job-related injuries, car accidents, heart attacks, and strokes.



Sleep Apnea Blocks Your Breath

Fact. The most common type of sleep apnea is obstructive sleep apnea or OSA. It happens when your tongue, tonsils, or other tissues in the back of the throat block the airway. When you try to breathe in, the air can't get through. Central sleep apnea is less common than OSA. Central

sleep apnea means the brain doesn't always signal the body to breathe when it should.

Only the Old Get Sleep Apnea

Myth. Doctors estimate that more than 12 million Americans have OSA. Although it's more common after age 40, the disorder can affect people of all ages. You're more likely to develop OSA if you are overweight, male, African-American, or Latino. The condition also tends to run in families.

Alcohol Will Help You Sleep

Myth. A nightcap may make you drowsy, but it does not promote good quality sleep. Alcohol relaxes the muscles in the back of the throat. This makes it easier for the airway to become blocked in people with OSA. Sleeping pills have the same effect.

Sleep Apnea Is Rare in Kids



Myth. OSA is actually common in children, affecting as many as one in 10. In most cases, the symptoms are mild, and the child eventually outgrows the condition. But some children may develop behavioral issues or serious medical problems as a result of OSA.

Losing Weight Can Help

Fact. You may be able to improve OSA by making some changes in your life. If you're overweight, talk to your doctor about starting a weight loss program. Shedding even a small percentage of your body weight can improve your symptoms. If you smoke, ask your doctor about products that can help you quit.

Lying On Your Side Can Help

Fact. If you sleep on your back, gravity can pull tissues in your throat



down, where they're more likely to block your airway. Sleeping on your side instead may help open the throat. There are special pillows to help keep you on your side. Some people even use shirts with tennis balls sewn to the back.

A Mouthpiece Works for Some

Fact. A dentist or orthodontist can specially make a mouthpiece or oral appliance to ease mild sleep apnea. The mouthpiece is custom made for the individual and adjusts the position of the lower jaw and tongue. You put it in at bedtime to help keep your airway open while you sleep.



CPAP Is Effective Treatment

Fact. CPAP stands for continuous positive airway pressure. A CPAP machine blows a steady stream of air into the airway. The flow of air is adjusted until it's strong enough to keep the airway open while you sleep. CPAP is the most common treatment for adults with moderate to severe OSA.



Try Surgery If Nothing Else Works

Myth. In some patients, surgery may be able to cure OSA. A good example is a child with large tonsils that block the airway. Removing tonsils can often provide a solution. In adults, surgery may improve symptoms by shrinking or stiffening floppy tissues. But this is not an option for everyone. Patients should consider the pros and cons and their doctor's opinion before going forward with a surgical procedure.

Understanding Sleep Disorders

Some Statistical Information

A 2005 survey by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) revealed that 75 percent of adults had at least one symptom of a sleep problem and that 54 percent experienced at least one symptom of insomnia - they either cannot get to sleep or cannot maintain being asleep.

Some other statistics on the prevalence of Sleep Disorders include:

- It is estimated that 30 to 40 percent of Americans suffer from insomnia occasionally, with 10 to 15 percent having chronic insomnia problems.

- Some 40 percent of adults have a snoring problem and they are not the only ones suffering as their spouses also suffer disruption of their sleep
- Between 2 to 4 percent of the population suffer from sleep apnea, a condition in which a person experience pauses in breathing during their sleep.
- Another 5 to 10 percent of people have restless leg syndrome (RLS), a condition of unpleasant tingling sensation in their legs at night which can cause pain.
- An NBC News report on 4th March, 2008 reported that 29% of the population find themselves sleepy at work.
- The same NBC report also revealed that 20% of the people said that lack of sleep resulted in less sex in their lives.

The Symptoms and Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation as a result of a sleeping disorder can have serious consequences. Sleep deprivation affect virtually all aspects of our lives and some of the consequences resulting from sleep deficiency include the following:

- Insufficient sleep could result in Obesity.
- Sleep deprivation could lead to Diabetes.
- Other consequences of poor sleep include Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure and Stroke.
- Your memory could be affected by the lack of sleep and you may face potential concentration problems.
- People who have lack of sleep are more moody and irritable.

- There is a higher rate of accidents and injuries amongst sleep-deprived persons.
- Sleep deficiency also lead to lower efficiency and lower job performance.
- Marital and social problems could arise due to sleep deprivation.
- Some sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea can be life-threatening.

Common Sleep Disorders

- Insomnia
 - This is the most common sleep disorder. It is characterized by the inability to fall asleep at night, or waking up earlier than you would like, resulting in an insufficient amount of sleep. Those suffering from insomnia do not feel that they have rested after their sleep. As a result, they may feel daytime fatigue and tiredness and are easily irritable, restless as well as having feelings of anxiety and hence stress.
- Sleep Apnea
 - Obstructive Sleep Apnea is characterized by obstruction of the upper airway during sleep, causing the cessation of breathing for 30 to 90 seconds at a time. This can happen as many as 600 times every night! The pauses in breathing are alternated by loud snores or brief gasps for air and often with movements of the whole body. People who suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnea are extremely sleep-deprived and often experience excessive sleepiness during the day.
- Snoring
 - About 40 percent of adults snore. Snoring occurs when your airway narrows to the extent that it causes the walls of your throat to vibrate as you breathe. If the airway narrows completely, breathing may stop altogether, as in Sleep Apnea, causing you to gasp for air and wake up temporarily. While simple snoring is not life-threatening, it can severely disrupt the sleep of your partner and may be worth treating.
- Narcolepsy

- Narcolepsy is a neurological disorder caused by the brain sending sleep-inducing signals resulting in recurring episodes of unavoidable sleep - literally, of "sleep attacks." These attacks can occur unpredictably at times that may not be appropriate to sleep such as while driving, having a conversation or eating.
- Restless Legs Syndrome
 - This sleep disorder causes unpleasant aching, tingling or itching sensations shortly before or just after a person gets into bed. This causes an irresistible urge to move the legs. The person may experience pain and discomfort. Having Restless Legs Syndrome or RLS may often lead to involuntary limb movements not only during sleep but possibly during the day as well. The sufferer may feel depressed and intensely anxious.
- Sleep Walking
 - Sleep Walking, or somnambulism, is the experience in which the brain remains partially asleep but the body is capable of movement and activity. This happens usually one to two hours after falling asleep. Sleepwalking can be triggered by emotional upsets, fever or sleep deprivation.

Sleep Apnea Treatment

Sleep apnea treatment: Overview

If you suffer from sleep apnea then you will know that it is in fact a sleep disorder which often stops the breathing pattern during sleep. Each episode usually will last long enough to miss one or more breaths and these episodes will often happen throughout the period of sleep. If you suffer from sleep apnea or you think your partner might suffer from it, then you will know that it can be a scary disorder which can often frighten witnesses, although most sufferers don't even know that it is happening to them. Sleep apnea usually isn't a dangerous disorder, although it can lead to broken sleep which can make the sufferer cranky and moody and tired because they are not getting enough sleep.

Treatment for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) includes:

- Lifestyle changes,
- Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) (to prevent the airway from closing during sleep),
- Use of dental devices (oral breathing devices) to help keep your airway open, medicine to help you stay awake during the day
- Surgery.

The goals of treatment are to relieve symptoms such as snoring and excessive daytime sleepiness and prevent other problems, such as high blood pressure. Your doctor will base your treatment on how severe your sleep apnea is.

In general, your doctor will have you try [lifestyle changes](#) and [CPAP](#) first. Surgery might be a first choice only if the sleep apnea is caused by a blockage that is easily fixed.

You may need to be treated for other health problems before you are treated for sleep apnea. For example, people who also have inflammation of the nasal passages (rhinitis) may need to use nose spray to reduce the inflammation. People who have an underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) need to take thyroid medicine.

[Children](#) have the same treatment options as adults. But surgery (tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy) typically is the first choice because enlarged tonsils or adenoids cause most cases of sleep apnea in children. If surgery is not possible or does not work, children are treated using CPAP.

Lifestyle Changes

The first treatment for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) consists of making lifestyle changes. Your sleep apnea may be helped if you:

- Lose weight (if needed).
 - Small studies have shown that losing weight decreases the number of times an hour that you stop breathing (apnea) or that a reduced amount of air enters your lungs (hypopnea). Experts agree that weight loss should be part of managing sleep apnea.
- Wake up at the same time every morning.

- Sleep on your side.
 - Try this: Sew a pocket in the middle of the back of your pajama top, put a tennis ball into the pocket, and stitch it shut. This will help keep you from sleeping on your back. Sleeping on your side may eliminate mild sleep apnea.
- Avoid the use of alcohol and some medicines, especially sleeping pills and sedatives, before bed.
- Quit smoking.
 - The nicotine in tobacco relaxes the muscles that keep the airways open. If you don't smoke, those muscles are less likely to collapse at night and narrow the airways.
- Raise the head of your bed 4 in. (10 cm) to 6 in. (15 cm)
 - Put bricks under the legs of the bed.
 - You can also use a special pillow (called a cervical pillow) when you sleep. A cervical pillow can help your head stay in a position that reduces sleep apnea.
 - Using regular pillows to raise your head and upper body will not work.
- Promptly treat breathing problems, such as a stuffy nose caused by a cold or allergies.
- Some people use nasal strips, which widen the nostrils and improve airflow. Although these strips may decrease snoring, they cannot treat sleep apnea.

First medical treatment

Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is nearly always the first medical treatment for sleep apnea.

With CPAP, you use a breathing device that prevents your airways from closing during sleep.

CPAP is the preferred treatment for moderate or severe sleep apnea.

It may take time for you to be at ease when you use CPAP. You may find that you want to take the mask off, or you may find it difficult to sleep while using it. If you can't get used to it, talk to your doctor. You might be able to try another type of mask or make other adjustments.

CPAP does not always get rid of daytime sleepiness. If you still feel sleepy during the day while using CPAP at night, tell your doctor.

Some CPAP devices automatically adjust air pressure or use different air pressures when you breathe in or out. They are easier and more comfortable for some people to use.

Other medical treatment includes oral breathing devices. These devices reposition your tongue and jaw during sleep, which opens up your airways.

Surgery might be the first treatment only when a blockage can be fixed easily, such as when you have overly large tonsils.

CPAP

One of the most well-known treatments and which is also one of the most effective sleep apnea treatments is the use of a continuous positive airway pressure which is also known as the CPAP device. This type of sleep apnea treatment works by splinting the airway of the sufferer keeping it open during sleep by a flow of pressurized air into the throat. This device helps with assisting patients who are suffering from sleep apnea to inhale but not exhale, however there is another device called the BiPAP machine which can assist sleep apnea sufferers with both inhaling and exhaling and is often used in more severe cases.



As well as the CPAP and the BiPAP machine, other sleep apnea treatments can come from a dentist who specializes in sleep disorders. They will be able to prescribe a sleep apnea sufferer with something called Oral Appliance Therapy, also known as OAT and this comes in the form of a customized mouthpiece which is fitted only for the sufferer and it works by shifting the bottom jaw forwards which in turn helps to open up the airway. This type of treatment is often rather successful, especially in sufferers who have only mild or moderate symptoms of sleep apnea. This is quite a new treatment which is becoming quite popular with

Treatment of Sleep Apnea

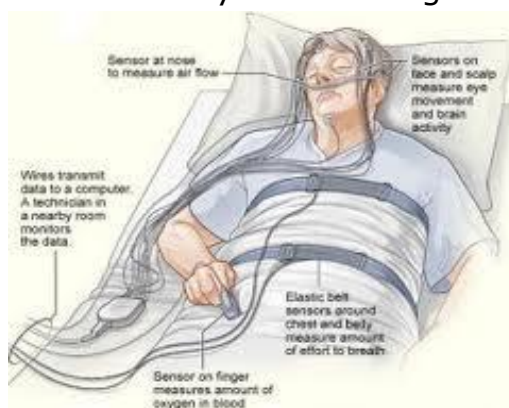
sleep apnea suffers, but it has been commonly used in Europe for quite some time now.

One thing which you can do to help yourself if you are a sufferer of sleep apnea is to lose weight. If you are overweight then this can affect your symptoms and can sometimes even be the main cause of sleep apnea. By losing weight if you need to and keeping an active social life and exercising regularly, you could help to treat your sleep apnea the natural way without having to use anything else except for your own will power. If you are overweight, then losing any excess weight will not only help the symptoms of your sleep apnea, but it will also make you feel a lot healthier over all.

Sleep Apnea Treatment: Mild Cases

If you have been having some difficulties sleeping, or you have been suffering from interrupted sleep then you could be suffering from sleep apnea. This sleep disorder is actually quite common and it is usually affected by age and weight, if you are heavily overweight then it is often more common and can affect you dramatically. Sleep apnea will cause a sufferer to stop breathing for one or more breaths throughout the night and whereas most sufferers do not even realize it is happening, for the partner of a sufferer it can be quite scary and it can end up disturbing both your sleep and the person you share a bed with leading to crankiness and tiredness. But there are a lot of ways that you can treat sleep apnea so that you can get a good night sleep and not worry about disturbing your partner.

Your first step when it comes to sleep apnea treatment is to get diagnosed. This is usually done through a sleep clinic where you will be monitored during



a period of sleep so that the condition and the severity of the disorder can be determined. There are many different kinds of sleep apnea treatment available, but if you are only suffering from a mild case, then there are some easy treatments which you can do for yourself which do not involve having to take medication or surgery.

There first and most effective sleep apnea

treatment in mild cases are, if you are obese or overweight to lose any excess weight. This will help to keep your airways clear and it will also make you much healthier in the long run. Losing weight can really help the symptoms of sleep apnea and it will also help your body to remain health if you keep active. Another affective sleep apnea treatment in mild to moderate cases is simply to invest in a special pillow which will keep you sleeping on your side. This is because most attacks of sleep apnea happen when you are lying on your back and your airway closes, but if you invest in one of these pillows then it should help to reduce the symptoms of sleep apnea dramatically so that you and your partner can sleep soundly.

Perhaps a more radical sleep apnea treatment is learning to play the didgeridoo. In 2005 a study was carried out on sufferers of sleep apnea and snoring and it was found that playing and learning the didgeridoo helped to reduce the effects of these conditions. It was found that it helped to strengthen muscles in the upper airway so that they were less likely to collapse during sleep it was also proven in this study that it could help to stop daytime sleepiness as well. So you not only get to learn a new and fun instrument, but you will be treating your sleep disorder as well!



Sleep Apnea Treatment: Severe Cases

If you suffer, or think that you might be suffering from sleep apnea then you might be wondering why type of sleep apnea treatment is best for you. There are many different types of treatments which can help with this sleep disorder which causes the sufferer to stop breathing on and off during sleep, but the treatment all depends on how severe each case is. A lot of sleep apnea sufferers tend to have very mild symptoms and will not even realize that it is happening to them, they might just feel a little tired in the morning from waking themselves up during the night, but in more severe cases sleep apnea can lead to a lot of complications.

This is why sleep apnea treatment is very important. One form of treatment for this disorder which has been proven to be one of the best forms of

treatment is the CPAP device. This is a device which the sufferer will wear during the night and it helps to keep the airways open and it will assist the sufferer in inhaling. Also available is the BiPAP device which does the same thing but it also helps you to exhale as well as to inhale. These two devices have been proven to be very effective in sleep apnea treatment, but it is not for everyone it all depends on your particular view.

Another device which has been proven to help treat sleep apnea is Oral Appliance Therapy or OAT as it is more commonly known. This is available from dentists who specialize in treating sleep disorders and it is a mouth piece which is custom made to fit each individual. Worn during the night, the OAT device helps to lower the bottom jaw so that airways stay open during sleep. This sleep apnea treatment is brilliant and it is a great way of treating the symptoms, however if you are suffering from a very severe cause of sleep apnea, then you might wish to try surgery.

Surgery for the treatment of this disorder is usually only done if you have already tried and exhausted all other treatments, or if you are suffering from a very severe case in which you are hardly sleeping at all. Surgery for the treatment of sleep apnea can vary from case to case, but the most common form of surgery includes the correction of the nasal passages and the throat. In more serious cases, sometimes the facial skeleton will be altered by a technique called maxillo mandibular advancement ([See below for more info](#)) in which the upper and lower jaw will be altered. This is usually only explored if other surgery has failed.

If you want to find out more information on the options available to you, then it is advised that you speak to your general physician who will be able to advise you on the best course of treatments and action. You can also find out more information about sleep apnea and treatments in the Resources section at the end.

Mandibular Appliance

When it comes to sleep apnea treatment, there are over 70 types of oral appliances which have been designed to treat this sleep disorder. As well as oral appliances, other forms of treatment for sleep apnea include surgery, medication such as Acetazolamide which helps to lower the pH level in the

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