

## Obstructive Sleep Apnea

### What is Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

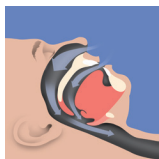
Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a common condition that affects millions of people. It's a chronic disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep. Each pause in breathing is called apnea – literally meaning “no breath” – and can last from several seconds to several minutes. Some people may experience 5 to 30 apnea episodes in one hour. When breathing is irregular, carbon dioxide builds up in the bloodstream, triggering the brain to wake the sleeping person and resume breathing.

OSA is a chronic, lifelong medical condition that can affect your sleep, health and quality of life. It has been linked to hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, work and driving related accidents and stroke. It can place unnecessary strain on relationships between bed partners, family and in the workplace.

### What Causes OSA?

During sleep, muscles relax, including those that control the tongue and throat, allowing the tongue and surrounding soft tissue to fall back into the throat area, collapsing the airway and obstructing the air flow. Your soft tissue may vibrate (snoring) or it may completely collapse causing you to stop breathing. Collapsing of the soft tissue is called Obstructive Apnea and may last for 10 seconds or longer.

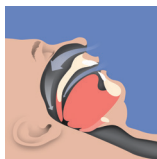
The condition is further complicated by excessive weight, loss of muscle tone due to aging or excessive tissue in the upper airway. Additionally, sleeping on the back or alcohol use may increase apnea events.



*Normal Airway*



*Constricted Airway*



*Obstructed Airway*

## **Obstructive Sleep Apnea** *(continued)*

### **Common Signs and Symptoms of Sleep Apnea**

- Waking up with a sore or dry throat
- Loud snoring
- Occasionally waking up with a choking or gasping sensation
- Sleepiness or lack of energy during the day
- Sleepiness while driving
- Morning headaches
- Restless sleep
- Forgetfulness, mood changes, and a decreased interest in sex
- Recurrent awakenings or insomnia
- Memory or learning problems and not being able to concentrate
- Feeling irritable, depressed, or having mood swings or personality changes
- Weight gain

Left untreated, sleep apnea can have serious and life-shortening consequences:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Automobile accidents caused by falling asleep at the wheel
- Diabetes
- Depression