



Bedside Tales

VitalAire CPAP
Support program

April 2011

An Expert Explains

I've been telling patients for over 20 years that they have sleep apnoea, and I often detect **both anxiety and relief**:

Anxiety: the idea that they **stop breathing is frightening**. Might my sleep be related to an illness? How can I avoid it? There is also the feeling of guilt about snoring and disturbing other people, without any solution.

Relief: because they finally **understand why they are so tired**, why they are sometimes at a loss for words or cannot watch a film to the end without falling asleep.

Research into sleep apnoea over the past 20 years has shown that treatment of apnoea with a positive airway pressure device can improve quality of sleep and reduce cardiac risk.

It is not easy to start treatment but nearly all patients who have been treated over the years acknowledge how much their sleep and day-to-day life in general has improved after a short time.

So don't wait any longer before talking to your sleep physician or CPAP therapy consultant. By **describing what you feel you will enable them to adjust your treatment to your needs**.



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Your doctor has told you that you suffer from sleep apnoea. What on earth is that?

First of all, you are not alone. About 20% of the population has at least mild sleep apnoea.¹ You may have consulted your doctor for a number of reasons: Your partner may complain about your snoring or be concerned that you stop breathing during sleep. You may suffer from excessive fatigue during the day, wake up tired or fall asleep at the wheel... Sleep apnoea is defined by the occurrence during sleep of **pauses in breathing** of at least 10 seconds, which recur at least 10 times per hour while sleeping.

But why you? Simply because certain morphologies – a particular anatomy of the mouth and throat – predispose to the disorder and may run in the family (a small chin, narrow nose or short neck for example). Evidence has shown that sleep apnoea affects 77% of morbidly obese patients.² The condition also affects males and females of all ages, including children.

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea Syndrome (OSAS) refers to when the spells of apnoea are caused by an obstruction of the airways (nasal congestion, a voluminous soft palate or a large tongue, for example). The more rare **central sleep apnoea** is the result of cerebral-related disorders.

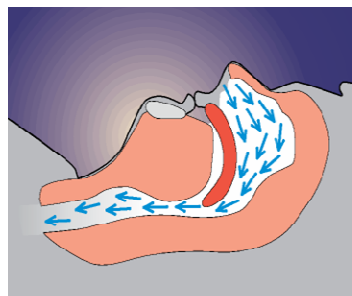


Figure 1

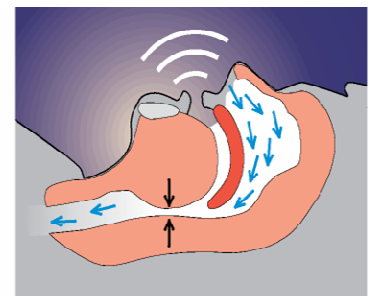


Figure 2

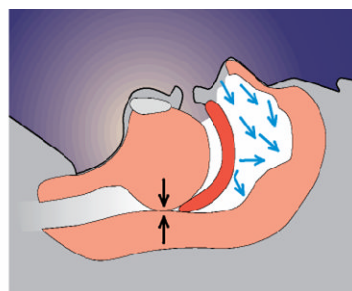


Figure 3

Figure 1 - Healthy upper airway

Figure 2 - Partially obstructed airway (snoring - vibration)

Figure 3 - Obstructed upper airway

¹ Logan, A.G., et al. (2001). High prevalence of unrecognized sleep apnoea in drug resistant hypertension. *Journal of Hypertension*, 19, 2271-2277

² O'Keefe, T., & Patterson, E. (2004). Evidence supporting routine polysomnography before bariatric surgery. *Obesity Surgery*, 14(1), 23-6

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Take care of your equipment

Most manufacturers recommend that in order to receive the optimum CPAP therapy you should change your:

- ✓ **Filter** every 3 months - to ensure that it is kept clean and doesn't become clogged
- ✓ **Cushion** every 6 months - so that it does not begin to harden and prevent you from getting a good seal
- ✓ **Tubing** every 12 months - over time small holes in your tubing may cause leaks, affecting the CPAP pressure
- ✓ **Mask** every 12 months - changing your mask is necessary to ensure that it is working at its best



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Tips for a healthy lifestyle*

- ✓ Rather than sitting down for a coffee break, head for a power break; a period of focused physical activity. Like smokers take their ten minute puff breaks - try an active exercise break to help burn more calories
- ✓ Always eat a small amount of protein with your carbohydrates to help you lose weight. Eating protein such as dairy, fish, lean chicken and red meat, eggs or legumes and pulses, will slow the release of carbohydrates into your body
- ✓ Make an appointment for exercise - utilizing your lunch times can be a good way to find free time in an otherwise busy day
- ✓ Find an activity that you enjoy doing. This helps to bring an element of fun into exercising and can increase your motivation

*Tips provided by Healthworks®



If you feel that your current physical condition is impacting on your OSA, you may need to have a repeat sleep study. Contact your GP/sleep physician, or AIR LIQUIDE Healthcare who can recommend sleep disorder centres throughout Australia.