Do You Snore?

Are you always tired? Snoring is no laughing matter! It may be more than an annoying habit. It may be a sign of Sleep Apnea.

How well do you sleep?

Just about everyone snores occasionally. Even a baby or a beloved pet may snore! But snoring can affect the quantity and quality of your sleep. Poor sleep can lead to daytime fatigue, irritability, poor behavior, trouble with relationships and increased health problems. If snoring is so loud that your bed partner can’t sleep, you may end up banished from the bedroom!

Sleep also affects our mood. People who chronically lack sleep are also more likely to become depressed. Sleep disorders deprive you of a good night’s sleep, causing chronic daytime exhaustion and long term cardiovascular stress.

If you snore regularly and experience the symptoms above, you may have a condition called sleep apnea. Although as widespread as asthma and diabetes, Sleep Apnea often remains undiagnosed as a hidden epidemic.
What exactly is Sleep Apnea?

When the muscles that control the upper airway relax, some people begin to snore. When the airway becomes completely blocked and the person temporarily stops breathing, this is an episode of “obstructive apnea.” Each apnea event may last for a few seconds or up to a couple minutes or more. Events may happen frequently – even several hundred times a night.

Signs of Sleep Apnea:

- Has your partner noticed that you gasp or stop breathing during sleep?
- Do you often wake up feeling unrefreshed?
- Do you sometimes feel excessively sleepy during the day?
- Have your energy and motivation levels decreased?
- Do you find it difficult to concentrate?
- Are you overweight?
- Are you a heavy snorer?
- Does anyone else in your family have a history of snoring and sleep apnea?

Did you know that sleep apnea is associated with serious health conditions?

- Do you suffer from high blood pressure?
- Have you suffered a stroke or heart attack/disease?

If you answer “YES” to any of these questions you may be at greater risk for Sleep Apnea.
**Serious Risk to your health.**

Recent research shows that snoring and Sleep Apnea are associated with many serious conditions. Left untreated, they are contributing risk factors for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and depression.

- More than 35% of people who continue to suffer from high blood pressure increase their risk for heart disease.
- Significantly, 83% of people who suffer from high blood pressure – despite taking three or more medications – also have Sleep Apnea.
- Almost 70% of people who have had a stroke have Sleep Apnea
- A person with Sleep Apnea is seven times more likely to have a car accident.

**Can this condition be treated? How?**

*There are many effective treatments for snoring. A widely accepted treatment for Sleep Apnea is an oral appliance therapy. An oral device custom fit by your dentist is designed to keep your airway open and help prevent apneas.*

*The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends an oral appliance as a first-time treatment option for patients with mild to moderate obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), and for those with severe OSA who either decline PAP therapy or are unable to successfully use PAP therapy.*

*This treatment does not involve medications or surgery and helps hundreds of thousands of people all over the world enjoy sleeping safely for a healthier life. Many experience the benefits quickly – often during the first night of use!*
We need restful sleep to think more clearly, react quickly, and create memories.
In fact, the pathways in the brain that help us learn and remember are very active when we have restorative sleep. If you snore, discovering the cause of your snoring and finding the right therapy will vastly improve your health, your relationships, and your future. Often the first symptom is excessive daytime sleepiness. The test below will help determine your level of daytime fatigue.

The Epworth Sleepiness Scale

Even if you haven’t done some of the things recently, consider how they would have affected you in our answer. Use the following scale to choose the most appropriate number for each situation.

0= Would never doze 2= Moderate chance of dozing
1= Slight chance of dozing 3= High chance of dozing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Chance of Dozing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sitting and Reading</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting, inactive in a public place (Theater or meeting)</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying down in the afternoon when circumstances permit</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting and talking to someone</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting quietly after lunch without alcohol</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a car, while stopping for a few minutes in traffic</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The higher the score, the greater the chances of a diagnosis of Sleep Apnea.

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Do you think you have Sleep Apnea?

By now you should have taken the Epworth Sleepiness Test within this newsletter. Discuss your results with us.

A good night’s sleep – Every night!
Dr. Alfano offers the complete solution for Sleep Apnea, including well-fitting, comfortable, quiet, easy-to-use, travel-friendly devices!