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Diagnosing Sleep Apnea

By Alan Schill

If you have noticed a pattern of heavy snoring, shortness of breath or a choking sensation during the night, then you may have sleep apnea. Most people think that snoring is just snoring, but it can actually be a warning sign of something much more serious. Sleep apnea is a serious medical condition that could lead to heart problems, an increased likelihood of having a stroke or other ailment. If not treated properly, the sufferer could clearly face serious health problems.

In order to properly diagnose sleep apnea, a physician will ask a series of questions and possibly order a sleep study. This is what happens when a potential sleep apnea victim visits a sleep center for one night. During that night, they are hooked up to various monitoring devices, which keeps a close watch on their sleeping patterns, breathing and snoring. The physician carefully reviews the results and either makes a positive diagnosis for sleep apnea or informs the patient that he/she tested negative for the disorder.

It is very important that sleep apnea be diagnosed as early as possible. A spouse may be your best source of information for early warning signs, such as heavy snoring, pauses in breathing, etc. The next step will be patient awareness, which may entail the patient realizing that he/she is exhausted during the day, unable to concentrate on normal activities and may have personality changes. These are due to lack of sleep, which is what happens when a sleep apnea sufferer suddenly awakens with difficulty breathing. A sleep apnea sufferer will completely stop breathing on more than one occasion throughout the night, which may cause them to wake up frequently. Even if they do not recall what happened, they are not receiving a quality night's sleep.

Additional warning signs, but not necessarily symptoms, include being overweight or obese, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, allergies, constantly sleeping on the back, etc. These may be a few of the factors that lead up to sleep apnea and, as a result, often have a hand in its prevention. By losing weight, giving up cigarettes and alcohol, ridding the home of allergens and sleeping on the side, sleep apnea may soon be a thing of the past.

This article is intended for informational purposes only. It should not be used as, or in place of, professional medical advice. Before beginning any treatment for snoring, please consult a doctor for a

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Symptoms Of Sleep Apnea

By Alan Schill

It is often hard to differentiate between snoring and a serious medical condition known as sleep apnea. However, there are definitive symptoms of sleep apnea if you know what to look for. Snoring, for instance, is a distracting occurrence caused by vibrations from fatty tissues rubbing against the back of the throat.

Sleep apnea is much more serious and may be recognize by the presence of heavy snoring, pauses between breaths, etc. A spouse may be the best source of information relating to these, but the apnea sufferer will instantly recognize the absence of breath through the night.

One of the symptoms of sleep apnea is the complete loss of air on multiple occasions throughout the night. It is a known fact that sufferers actually stop breathing on more than on occasion.

As a result, the sufferer may awake short of breath, choking or gasping for air, etc. They may not realize what has happened at first, but may start to recognize a pattern of shortness of breath and discomfort during the night.

Sleep apnea is often recognized in other ways, as well. One of the less obvious symptoms of sleep apnea is fatigue, which is also present in so many other ailments. Fatigue exists due to the disruption of sleep and/or inability to fall asleep. Additional symptoms of sleep apnea may include headaches, the inability to concentrate on everyday activities, exhaustion, irritability, etc.

The symptoms of sleep apnea are noticeable if you are familiar with them. However, even if symptoms of sleep apnea are present, only a physician can properly diagnose the disorder. A series of questions and a sleep study may be ordered during the evaluation period.

It is very important to receive an early diagnosis because, if left untreated, sleep apnea can lead to other serious medical conditions. Among them, heart disease, an increased risk of a stroke and more.

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