



## Sleep Apnea

### MU Patient Education Series

#### **Definition:**

Sleep apnea is a condition where the affected person repeatedly stops breathing during sleep. In some instances, these episodes may last 10 seconds or longer. This delay causes oxygen levels in the blood to decrease. Sleep apnea may also be caused by obstruction of the upper airway, resulting in obstructive sleep apnea, or by a failure of the brain to initiate a breath, known as central sleep apnea. Sleep apnea may increase the chances of diabetes, heart failure, and hypertension or worsening existing medical conditions.

#### **WHO IS AT RISK FOR SLEEP APNEA?**

- People who are overweight
- Men are more likely than women to have sleep apnea
- Risk increases with aging
- Family history of sleep apnea
- Individuals who have small airways in their nose, throat, or mouth
- Small children who have enlarged tonsils
- Individuals who smoke
- Individuals with diabetes

#### **SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:**

- Gasping or snorting noises during sleep that is momentarily interrupted
- Loud and chronic snoring
- Dry mouth or sore throat when you wake up
- Frequently awaking through the night to urinate



- Morning headaches
- Feeling depressed, irritable, mood swings or personality changes
- Experiencing learning problems, or finding it hard to concentrate
- Daytime sleepiness
- Episodes of falling asleep during the daytime
- Hyperactivity, poor school performance, anger or hostile behavior have been reported in children who experience sleep apnea

### TREATMENT:

Treatment of sleep apnea depends on what may be causing the concern. If other medical problems are present, such as congestive heart failure or nasal obstruction, sleep apnea may resolve with treatment of these conditions.

### SUGGESTIONS TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP:

It is important to keep consistent sleep practices. It is recommended that adults should have 7-9 hours of sleep each night. However, if your sleep problems persist or interfere with how you are feeling during the day, follow up with your healthcare provider.

- Stay on schedule with going to bed at the same time each night
- Rise at the same time each morning
- Prior to going to sleep, make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark and is a relaxing environment
- Physical activity may help promote sleep, but not within a few hours of bedtime
- Avoid large meals before bedtime

### **DISCLAIMER:**

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