



OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA (OSA)– PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS OSA?

OSA is slow or absent breathing for periods of 10 seconds or more while sleeping. These events can occur several times during the night (sometimes over 100 times per hour!). The sufferer is often unaware and is alerted to the problem by an observer. These periods are often followed by a choking or spluttering where the sufferer wakes, starts breathing again and then falls back asleep.

SYMPTOMS?

Somebody else observing apnoea is the clearest symptom. A sufferer may also wake feeling unrefreshed, be drowsy during the day, be irritable, wake with a headache or be tired while driving. Snoring is also a good indicator for OSA.

WHO GETS OSA?

The most common demographic is overweight, middle aged men. However women or people with certain anatomical structures are also at risk of being an OSA sufferer.

CAUSE OF OSA?

OSA is a physical problem where soft tissue around the airway obstructs airflow. During certain stages of sleep our muscles become more relaxed and we are more prone to OSA, especially people with larger necks. Some medications and alcohol can be aggravating factors in OSA

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

General lowering of life quality is the main side effect of sleep apnoea. As you are generally more drowsy during the day you also subject yourself to a greater risk of Motor Vehicle and Workplace Accidents. If suffering is prolonged, you also increase your chances of Hypertension, Cardio-Vascular Disease and Stroke. The latest data also shows strong links between Type II Diabetes and OSA.

TESTING FOR OSA?

Testing involves the monitoring of your sleep patterns, air flow, muscle movements and blood oxygen levels. Tests can be conducted in hospitals or just as effectively in your own home - thanks to modern technology.

TREATMENT?

Depending on severity, treatment will differ. It is thought that CPAP (Continual Positive Airway Pressure) is the Gold Standard of treatment. Other treatments include Mandibular Advancement splints, weight loss, removal of aggravating factors and avoiding sleeping on your back. Surgery can also be of assistance in treating OSA.

*** For more information speak to a Health Professional about OSA.**

www.sleepright.com.au is also a great source for OSA and general sleep information.