



HOLY FAMILY
PARISH

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Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them....” (John 20:22)

OSAS is a disorder involving frequent partial or complete collapse of the breathing passageway during sleep. During sleep, the muscles in the throat relax, making the airway more susceptible to collapse. With the airway blocked, no breathing occurs and oxygen levels drop. In order to breathe again, you must wake up briefly, which ultimately causes non-restful sleep.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, **100 million Americans of all ages** suffer from sleep disorders that keep them from regularly getting a good night's rest. There are **84 different sleep disorders, and they are far from minor nuisances**. Not only do they make you lose sleep, they can put your health at risk. Sleep apnea is one of these disorders.

Warning Signs of OAS:

- ◆ Loud snoring.
- ◆ A pattern of snoring interrupted by pauses, then gasps, reveals the sleeper's breathing stops and restarts.
- ◆ Falling asleep at inappropriate times, such as at work, movies or while driving.
- ◆ Trouble concentrating, forgetfulness, irritability, depression, loss of interest.
- ◆ Headaches or nausea upon awakening.
- ◆ Frequent nighttime urination or bed wetting.

These problems usually appear slowly over many years. Sometimes OSAS symptoms go unnoticed, or their significance is downplayed. Family members, employers, or coworkers may be the first to recognize a pattern of daily excessive sleepiness and/or changes in mood or behavior. If so, they should encourage a visit to a healthcare professional.

In Children:

- OSAS has been linked to some cases of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), the exact relationship is still uncertain. More research is going on.
- OSAS is present in overweight children and those who have enlarged tonsils and adenoids
- Children with OSAS may snore or “squeak” during sleep, appear to have difficulty breathing during sleep, sleep fitfully, and have daytime hyperactivity.
- Older children who have OSAS may seem sluggish and may perform poorly in school. They may be labeled as having attention-deficit disorder, “slow” or “lazy.”
- Since it is not normal for a child to snore loudly every night, parents should report their child's snoring to a healthcare professional.

Causes of OSAS:

- ◆ When the body's muscles relax when you are asleep. This relaxation lets the airway in the back of the throat become too narrow, and this interferes with breathing causing a time of increased health risk
- ◆ A smaller-than-normal jaw, overbite, large tongue, enlarged tonsils, or tissues that partially block the entrance to the airway can be factors.
- ◆ Alcohol, sleeping pills, and tranquilizers taken at bedtime also reduce muscle tone and can make the throat more likely to collapse.
- ◆ Some physical conditions can play a role. OSAS most often strikes overweight men. A different throat structure or levels of hormones, may protect women. In later years the gap between the sexes narrows, although never disappears completely.

Treatment: Lifestyle changes: i.e. lose weight, avoid alcohol and sedatives, quit smoking, sleep-position training (side sleeping), medical therapy, positive airway pressure (CPAP), oral appliances and surgery. Consult your physician for suggested treatment for you.

Taken from American Academy of Medicine wellness booklets. For more information check out the pamphlets on the Parish nurse Bulletin board in the LCH. Parish Nurse Voicemail: 330-688-6412, ext. 462.