

# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea/Apnea Hypopnea (OSAH)

## What is obstructive sleep apnoea & hypopnea (OSAH)?

Obstructive sleep apnoea & hypopnea (**commonly called sleep apnoea or OSA**) is a sleep disorder. There is recurrent obstruction to airflow during our sleep, and this can lead to pauses/ cessation in breathing (apnoea episodes) or reduced/ shallow breathing (hypopneas episodes) **more often than normal**.

## What is sleep disordered breathing (SDB)?

The awareness regarding sleep apnoea and other related disorders has increased significantly in general population over the last 2 decades. SDB is a term used for a wide variety of sleep related disturbances causing respiratory issues/ symptoms. The most common SDB are OSA and upper airway resistance. Most of the specialist and researchers now believe that upper airway resistance is not a separate entity but a part of OSA.

## What are the symptoms of sleep apnoea (OSA)?

Symptoms of OSA happen during sleep time hence it can be difficult for someone to figure it out on their own. You need to discuss with your GP or specialist about OSA if:

1. You are told that you snore loudly during sleep
2. You are told that you have pauses in your breathing during your sleep
3. And you feel tired, fatigued and/ or sleepy during that day

### Following symptoms can happen at night time in OSA:

1. Snoring
2. Witnessed apnoea episodes (long pauses in breathing)
3. Waking up with gasping, snorting or choking noises
4. Broken sleep
5. Symptoms of reflux and/or choking
6. Getting up at night with dry mouth or thirst
7. Nocturnal sweating
8. Nocturia (getting up at night one or more time for voiding urine)

### Following early morning symptoms can be seen in patients with OSA:

1. Headaches
2. Feeling of unrefreshing sleep
3. Muzzy head
4. Feeling tired

### Following symptoms can be present during the day time:

1. Feeling very tired
2. Feeling sleep/ dozing off very easily
3. Finding it hard to concentrate
4. Mood swings

## What puts people at risk of getting sleep apnoea?

1. Obesity
2. Having family history of sleep apnoea
3. Smoking & drinking alcohol
4. Large tonsils
5. Adenoids
6. Increasing age
7. Large neck size

### **What are the treatment options available?**

Mild OSA does not always need treating. Your specialist will decide about the best line of treatment for you. Generally CPAP machine is used for the treatment of sleep apnoea. Other treatment options include:

1. Oral devices that can help in keeping the airways open while sleeping
2. Sometimes surgical options can be considered as well

Things that you can do to help with OSA:

1. Try to sleep on your side
2. Try to loose weight if you are overweight
3. Do not smoke
4. Do not drink too much alcohol
5. Do not take sleeping tablets unless prescribed by your doctor

### **Why is it important to treat OSA?**

If sleep apnoea is left untreated, it can be associated with:

1. High blood pressure or uncontrolled hypertension
2. High chances of having strokes and mini strokes
3. High chances of having cardiovascular diseases
4. High chances of poor control of diabetes
5. High chances of getting metabolic syndrome (obesity, high blood pressure, high blood sugar and cholesterol)