

How Do Sleep Disorders Affect Your Life?

A good night's sleep is critical to living a healthy, active life. Sleeping gives your body a chance to heal, recharge, and rest so it can function properly during waking hours. Sleep disorders interfere with these critical functions, increasing your risk of contracting several diseases and complicating symptoms of those from which you may already suffer.

Types of Sleep Disorders

Insomnia

Caused by chronic tension, poor sleep habits, drugs, or sleep apnea, insomnia is a condition in which a person has difficulty falling asleep, wakes up during the night or earlier than planned. Although many people experience periodic insomnia throughout their lives, if it happens frequently it should be evaluated by a doctor.

Sleep Apnea

Frequently noticed by spouses, a sleep apnea sufferer may stop breathing for 30 seconds or longer while sleeping. Characterized by loud snoring, daytime sleepiness, waking with a headache, and needing to use the bathroom during the night, this condition can be life-threatening.

Sleep apnea significantly increases the risk of motor vehicle accidents, high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, congestive heart failure, and depression.

Restless Leg or Unusual Muscle Movements

Patients who suffer from restless leg syndrome often battle numbness, tingling, or searing pain in their legs or calves. This discomfort causes them to move their legs or body frequently, thus the term "restless leg syndrome". This constant movement causes disrupted sleep and daytime sleepiness.

Narcolepsy

Symptoms of this disorder include uncontrollable episodes of falling asleep during regular daytime activities, nightmares, or hallucinations when beginning to sleep, or a feeling of paralysis upon waking.

Sleep-Wake Scheduling

In today's 24/7 world, many people have to live with a disrupted sleep schedule. When the regular pattern of sleeping and waking is interrupted by shift work, jet lag, or other factors, some people have a difficult time finding a sleep-wake pattern that suits their need for getting enough rest.

And If You Have a Disorder . . .

First of all, be assured that you're not alone. In a recent study, as many as 40% of Americans reported some symptoms of a sleep disorder. The first step is talking with your doctor, who may schedule a sleep study at Salem Township Hospital. If you do indeed have a sleep disorder, there are a wide variety of treatments available to help you.

Don't put it off . . . chronic sleep problems can be life threatening.

What Is a Sleep Study?

A sleep study is done at the hospital and requires an overnight stay in our comfortable, specially designed rooms. During your stay, you are monitored by using painless, skin-surface devices. Staff members track your brain waves, muscle movements, and eye movements. Your body's oxygen saturation, heart rate, chest and abdominal efforts, body and leg movements, and airflow from your mouth and nose are also monitored.

When your test is completed, it will be evaluated by Dr. S.K. Nemani, MD, SC, a neurologist who is trained and board certified in sleep medicine. Results will be forwarded to your doctor for diagnosis and follow-up treatment.

To Schedule a Sleep Study . . .

Your doctor must refer you to Salem Township Hospital's Sleep Study Clinic before a sleep study can be scheduled. Once you have been referred, you may contact us at 533-8700. When your study is scheduled, our staff will give you more information about what items to bring with you and what you can expect while participating in the study.

If you have any questions, please call Chris Jahn, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services at Salem Township Hospital, at 548-3194, extension 8241.