

## *Introduction*

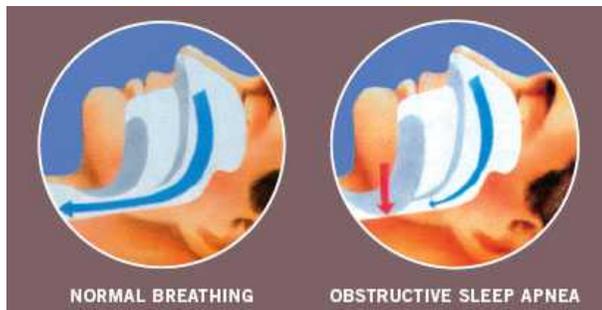
Respiratory Therapy Specialists Inc has been providing quality respiratory home care services to Atlantic Canada since 1992. At Respiratory Therapy Specialists Inc., we pride ourselves in providing exceptional customer service and the most comprehensive client follow-up program available.

## *Obstructive Sleep Apnea*

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a serious and potentially life-threatening condition that occurs when a person repeatedly stops breathing during sleep due to a collapse in their airway.

People can have OSA for a number of reasons. Sometimes the cause is unknown, or it may be due to a combination of factors. The following are some common causes of OSA:

- Weight gain/obesity
- Decreased muscle tone
- Physical makeup of the airway
- Alcohol and sedative use



## *OSA Symptoms*

Symptoms (check all that apply)

- Snoring
- Gasping or choking at night
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Drowsiness while driving
- Overweight/obese
- Restless sleep
- Poor concentration/memory
- High blood pressure

If more than one of the above symptoms are selected, patients should discuss screening for OSA with their physician.

## *Associated Health Risks*

If left undiagnosed and untreated, over time, OSA can result in the following health concerns:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Decreased quality of life



## *Diagnosis*

The diagnosis of OSA can be confirmed with a sleep study, which is completed in the comfort of the patient's own home. With a short office appointment, our qualified Respiratory Therapists will demonstrate the simple set-up of the portable sleep monitor.

## *Diagnosis*

**In order to better serve our customers, Respiratory Therapy Specialists Inc. does not charge for overnight sleep testing.**

All sleep studies completed will be interpreted by a sleep specialist who is independent from Respiratory Therapy Specialists Inc.

## *Treatment*

Once the sleep study results have been received and reviewed by the referring physician, a prescription is required to begin treatment.

The most common and successful treatment for OSA sufferers is CPAP, which stands for Continuous Positive Airway Pressure. CPAP works by blowing pressurized and humidified air through a special mask worn on the face, which keeps the airway open during sleep.

Success with CPAP therapy is dependent upon having the appropriate equipment. We offer a wide range of CPAP machines, each designed to meet specific needs of our patients. We also offer a wide variety of masks and accessories. Because patient comfort is our primary goal, we have chosen products with the latest technology. Our patients can rest assured they will be receiving the most comfortable and advanced treatment for their condition.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How common is OSA?**

A: Approximately 4% of men and 2% of women have OSA.

**Q: Will losing weight help OSA?**

A: If being overweight is a contributing factor to the patient's OSA, weight loss should be included in the treatment plan.

**Q: How will patients know if CPAP is working?**

A: Patients should notice an improvement in their quality of sleep and energy levels. Snoring should stop and their breathing pattern will normalize.

**Q: Does CPAP have to be used forever?**

A: CPAP is a treatment for OSA, not a cure. Therefore, it must be worn every night to be effective.

**Q: Is CPAP covered by provincial health plans?**

A: CPAP is not covered by provincial health care plans. However, most private insurance plans offer partial or complete coverage.



## Something to Sleep On...

There are many simple changes you can make to improve the quality of your sleep.

- Avoid napping during the day.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly, but avoid exercising immediately before bedtime.
- Avoid heavy meals prior to sleeping.
- Go to bed at the same time each night.
- Sleep in a dark, quiet room.
- Bedrooms are for sleeping-remove phones and televisions.
- Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature.



**Respiratory  
Therapy  
Specialists Inc.**

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### NOVA SCOTIA

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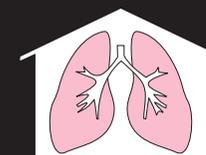
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**Respiratory  
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... from hospital to home

## Sleep Apnea Patient Guide



[www.rtsatlantic.com](http://www.rtsatlantic.com)