

## How does sleep apnea impact overall health?

A good night's sleep helps you to feel refreshed, energetic, and alert. For many people, achieving that goal is a challenge. Lack of sleep can have a serious effect on your overall health and wellbeing in several ways, such as:

- Increased risk for illnesses or diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, depression, headaches, stroke, heart attack, cardiac disease, and worsening of ADHD. Recent studies have also identified a link between low oxygen levels from a lack of deep sleep and the risk for dementia
- Cognitive impairments which affect
  - Attention
  - Concentration
  - Reasoning
  - Critical thinking and problem solving
  - Ability to learn, retain information, and coalesce memories
- Reduced libido
- Greater susceptibility to accidents
- Dull skin and diminished collagen production
- Weight gain

It is estimated that more than 18 million people are affected by sleep apnea in the United States. Sleep apnea occurs when breathing stops repeatedly during sleep, reducing the oxygen flow to the brain and the rest of the body.

There are two types of sleep apnea. Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) the more common form, occurs when the airway is blocked, typically by soft tissues in the throat, halting breathing. With central sleep apnea, the airway remains open but the brain neglects to signal the muscles to breathe.

Patients who are higher risk for sleep apnea include:

- Over 40 years of age
- Male
- Overweight
- Have a family history
- Have larger neck sizes
- Have larger tongues or tonsils, or smaller jaw structure
- Experience gastroesophageal reflux (GERD)
- Have allergies, sinus problems, or deviated septum

Treatment for sleep apnea may include weight management and lifestyle changes, surgery, a medical device called Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) which pushes air continuously into the airway to prevent collapse, and oral appliance therapy.

At Burman Dental, L.L.C. in Jupiter, FL, Dr. Steven A. Burman is a recognized author, presenter, media spokesman, and dental professional who truly understands the connection between optimal oral health and overall physical well-being. If you are suffering from sleep apnea, you may find that oral appliance therapy is the solution for you.

The oral appliance is a small device, similar to an orthodontic retainer or sports mouthguard, that is made of plastic and is worn at night to prevent airway obstruction. The device aligns and stabilizes the bottom jaw, tongue, soft palate and uvula in the proper positions and increases the muscle tone of the tongue. Following a comprehensive consultation, including a home sleep study conducted by a physician, Dr. Burman custom-designs the device for comfortable fit. Follow up care includes continual assessment of the device, effectiveness of treatment, and patient comfort.

The advantages of oral appliance therapy include:

- Easy to wear, comfortable design
- Non-invasive treatment
- Small appliance, easy to pack for travel

For more information about oral appliance therapy for sleep apnea, contact Burman Dental, L.L.C. today at 561-404-4325.