

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP APNEA

Sleep apnea is a serious sleep-related breathing disorder. It can have serious consequences for your health and is a potentially fatal condition.

Let's discuss:

- **THE SYMPTOMS**
- **THE RISK FACTORS**
- **THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT**



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SYMPTOMS OF SLEEP APNEA:

- Loud snoring.
- Waking up gasping or choking.
- Indications of irritability, morning headaches, lack of energy, difficulty focussing and excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Mood changes such as depression or being easily upset.
- Partner notices episodes of paused breathing during sleep.

RISK FACTORS AND COMPLICATIONS:

- Sleep apnea causes repeated pauses in breathing during sleep resulting in oxygen deprivation.
- Anyone can develop sleep apnea but there are certain factors such as obesity, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, asthma, age that can put you at higher risk
- It can cause cardiovascular problems that can increase blood pressure and put you at greater risk of heart disease, heart attack or failure, arrhythmias and stroke.
- It affects cognitive function, alertness and decision-making which can lead to accidents from fatigue.
- It can affect your partner's sleep and deprive them of a good nights rest putting them at risk of daytime fatigue complications.

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT:

- Lifestyle changes like weight management, exercise, quitting smoking and limiting or eliminating alcohol can help prevent or treat sleep apnea.
- A CPAP machine could be recommended post-diagnosis to keep airways open during sleep to help reduce risks.

Consult your doctor and consider getting tested if you suspect sleep apnea as it can seriously affect your health.

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