

Obstructive Sleep Apnea–Information Sheet

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Condition: Events of intermittent, short, blockage of breathing while asleep
Each blockage last from 10 seconds to over a minute
Events can be partial (Hypopnea) or completed (Apnea)
To have the condition diagnosed, insurance requires 5 events an hour

Effects: Events disturbed sleep and causes symptoms (tiredness, poor quality sleep, headaches).
The events cause long-term illnesses (hypertension, diabetes, strokes, and heart attacks)

Diagnoses: Individuals usually have symptoms.
Significant others often observe problems.
Testing shows the obstructions and determines the frequency per hour.

Testing: Home Sleep Apnea Testing can be used to measure the number of events
Sleep center testing (polysomnograms) can be used to measure the events and evaluate for other sleep disorders. A trial of therapy can be performed during the polysomnogram in some situations.

Counting: The number of events while asleep is counted and the number per hour of sleep is calculated.
The Apnea Hypopnea Index (AHI) is the number of events per hour.

Severity: The severity of the obstructive sleep apnea is rated by the number of times per
Hour of sleep the blockages occurred on testing.

Mild apnea - the AHI is 5 to 14
Moderate apnea – the AHI is 15 to 30
Severe apnea – the AHI is greater than 30

The highest levels recorded are AHIs of 130 to 135.
The severity (AHI) is a good predictor of the long term effects of the apnea.
Symptoms are **not** always a good indicator of the AHI.

Goals of treatment:

Improve symptoms – Sleep better
Reduce the number of events to less than 5 per hour – Live better longer.