

OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA–INFORMATION SHEET

Robert G Hooper, M.D. (March 2023)

- Condition:** Events of intermittent, short, blockage of breathing while asleep
Each blockage last from 10 seconds to over a minute
Each blockage 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 frequency per hour of obstruction and the oxygen levels.
- 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 blockage 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 (AHI) the blockages occurred on testing.

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

The adjectives mild, moderate and severe refer to the long term risk from Obstructive Sleep Apnea, not how the person feels.

The highest levels recorded are AHIs of greater than 130.

The severity (AHI) is a good predictor of the long term effects of apnea.

Oxygen levels are a good predictor of long term effects of 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.

Keep you Oxygen levels in a safe range