

# SLEEP APNEA

The Greek word “apnea” means “without breath”. Sleep apnea occurs when breathing spontaneously stops and starts or becomes very shallow during sleep.

These pauses may last from seconds to minutes, several times an hour, resulting in choking or snorting when normal breathing resumes. Sleep quality is poor and accompanying snoring can be extremely loud.

Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when throat muscles relax and the soft tissues in the rear of the throat collapse during sleep.

Central sleep apnea is less common in the average population, and may be triggered by medications or conditions, and occurs when the brain fails to signal involuntary muscles that control breathing.

Mixed sleep apnea is a combination of the two. Actual signs and symptoms of sleep apnea can only be directly observed during a sleep study performed by a certified sleep medicine team. People often fail to realize sleep apnea is the underlying cause of their daily fatigue, excessive daytime sleepiness, or headache and dry mouth upon waking.



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