

PEDIATRIC OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA

Quick Facts:

Obstructive sleep apnea is a sleep disorder that occurs in many children. It involves complete or partial obstruction of the upper airway during sleep. Snoring is a common warning sign for sleep apnea. This snoring is usually loud and may end with a gasp for breath. Early identification of sleep apnea is important to ensure your child's normal growth and development.

KEY POINTS:

- **Up to 4% of children will experience sleep apnea.**
- **Early identification of sleep apnea may prevent negative consequences such as daytime sleepiness, irritability, behavioral problems, learning difficulties, and poor academic performance.**
- **Risk factors for developing sleep apnea include large tonsils and obesity.**
- **Your sleep doctor will help you determine if your child needs treatment for sleep apnea.**



How Can I Learn More?

- Talk to your physician.
- Visit www.sleepeducation.org

Am I At Risk:

Most children with obstructive sleep apnea have a history of snoring. Risk factors for sleep apnea include large tonsils, a small chin, and obesity. Sleep apnea also is common in children with Down syndrome.

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

Children need healthy sleep in order for their body and brain to develop. Poor sleep in a child can cause sleepiness, irritability, behavioral problems, learning difficulties, and poor academic performance. In severe cases, a child's sleep problem can cause high blood pressure. Obstructive sleep apnea is a common cause of disrupted sleep in children. Sleep apnea often involves brief, cyclic episodes of disturbed breathing. Some children with sleep apnea have longer periods of partial upper airway obstruction.

Sleep apnea typically occurs in conjunction with loud snoring. A child is diagnosed with sleep apnea when breathing stops for short periods during sleep. Children with sleep apnea often have large tonsils and may sleep with their mouths open. They also may sleep in unusual positions, such as sitting up. In addition, they can have headaches, nighttime sweats, and high blood pressure. Children with sleep apnea can be normal weight or obese.

