

INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE TREATMENT OF SLEEP DISORDERED BREATHING

Snoring and Sleep Apnea

Sleep disordered breathing, a range of breathing problems that include snoring and obstructive sleep apnea, occur during sleep due to partial or total closure of the airway. Snoring is a noise created when the airway gets narrow or partially closes. Sometimes, the only problem associated with snoring is the noise itself. However, consistent, loud, heavy snoring has been linked to medical disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea, high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke. Obstructive sleep apnea is a serious medical condition in which the airway totally closes many times during the night. Untreated sleep apnea can result in excessive daytime sleepiness, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, reflux, depression, heart attack, stroke and even death.

Screening for Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Because any sleep disordered breathing may potentially represent a health risk, all patients will be screened for obstructive sleep apnea with an overnight pulse oximetry test to measure oxygen levels in the blood. If the patient has had a recent overnight sleep study at home or a polysomnogram test at a sleep laboratory, the screening test may be waived.

Treatment with Oral Appliances

Oral appliances – such as the TAP® device – may be helpful in the treatment of snoring, upper airway resistance syndrome (UARS) and obstructive sleep apnea. Oral appliances are designed to assist breathing by keeping the jaw and tongue forward, thereby opening the airway space in the throat. While documented evidence exists that oral appliances have substantially reduced snoring and sleep apnea for many people, there are no guarantees this therapy will be successful for every individual. Several factors contribute to the snoring/apnea condition including nasal obstruction, narrow airway space in the throat and excess weight. Because each person is different and presents with unique circumstances, oral appliances will not reduce snoring and/or apnea for everyone. Post testing will be done to assure effective treatment. For patients with sleep apnea, the device must be worn nightly. Discontinuation of use is a hazard to your health and can lead to further medical problems such as a heart attack, stroke or even death.

Possible Complications

Some people may not be able to tolerate the appliance in their mouths. Also, some individuals may develop temporary adverse side effects such as excessive salivation, sore jaw joints, sore teeth and a slight change in their “bite”. However, these usually diminish within an hour after removing the appliance in the morning. On a rare occasion, a permanent “bite” change may occur due to jaw joint changes and/or tooth movement. Generally, this can be prevented by using an exercise device such as an AM Aligner™ or other exercise techniques that you will be shown. These complications may or may not be fully reversible once appliance therapy is discontinued. If not, restorative, orthodontic, and/or surgical treatment may be required for which you are responsible. Oral appliances can wear and break. The possibility that these or broken parts from them may be swallowed or aspirated exists. If any unusual symptoms or complications occur, you are advised to schedule an office visit with your doctor to evaluate the situation. Discuss the problems with her/him before discontinuing use. Your doctor will make recommendations of appropriate therapy alternatives such as traditional CPAP therapy and/or surgery.

Length of Treatment

The oral appliances are strictly mechanical devices to maintain an open airway during sleep. It does not cure snoring or sleep apnea. Therefore, the device must be worn nightly for a lifetime to be effective. Over time, simple snoring may develop into sleep apnea. Sleep apnea also may become more severe over time. Therefore, the appliance may not maintain its effectiveness. The device needs to be checked at least once a year to ensure proper fit. The mouth must also be examined annually to assure a healthy condition. Your doctor may periodically administer a follow-up sleep test to ensure that the device is still effective in treating your condition.

Individuals who have been diagnosed as having sleep apnea may notice that after sleeping with an oral appliance that they feel more refreshed and alert during the day. This is only subjective evidence of improvement and may be misleading. The only way to accurately measure whether the appliance is keeping the oxygen level sufficiently high to prevent abnormal heart rhythms and other problems is to be retested with a sleep recorder or polysomnogram.

Alternative Treatments

Other accepted treatment for sleep-disordered breathing include: behavior modification, weight loss, constant positive airway pressure (CPAP) and surgery. These alternatives have been explained and you have chosen oral appliance therapy to treat your particular problem and are aware that it may not be completely effective for you.

Unusual Occurrences

As with any form of medical or dental treatment, unusual occurrences can and do happen. Broken or loosened teeth, dislodged dental restorations, mouth sores, periodontal problems, root resorption, non-vital teeth, muscle spasms, and ear problems, are all possible occurrences.

Most of these complications and unusual occurrences are infrequent. Additional medical and dental risks that have not been mentioned may occur. Good communication is essential for the best treatment results. Please call or come to the office if you have any questions or problems regarding treatment.

Consent to Treatment

I certify that I have read, or had read to me, the contents of this form. I realize and accept any risks and limitations involved, and do consent to treatment.

I also consent to the taking of photographs and x-rays before, during and after treatment, and their use in scientific papers and demonstrations. I understand that measures will be taken to protect my identity.

Patient Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

***PLEASE SIGN IN THE PRESENCE OF AN OFFICE STAFF MEMBER**