

# OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA

**G**ood sleep habits have always been associated with good health. Not getting proper sleep can be detrimental to health and can contribute to high blood pressure, irregular heart rhythms, stroke and heart failure. Studies have shown that getting less than five hours of sleep each night can double the risk of heart related adverse events and death.

Sleep disturbance may not just be due to insomnia or the inability to sleep. One of the more dangerous causes of sleep disturbance is obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA), a common disorder in which the airway collapses or becomes blocked during sleep. People who are generally overweight are more likely to experience OSA due to the excess fat around the neck falling backwards and obstructing the airway. OSA can also be caused by structural abnormalities of the airway for others.

This kind of obstruction in the airways often causes loud snoring and pauses in breathing. Pauses for more than 10 seconds despite one's continual effort to breathe are considered dangerous. In fact, OSA has been associated with an increased risk of Cardiac Disease and Sudden Cardiac Death.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE OSA?

Sadly, you wouldn't often suspect you have OSA unless someone brings it to your attention. How many of us are actually aware that we snore? If you live with your spouse or family, they can be your watchdogs at night. If you feel lethargic, irritable and depressed throughout the day despite getting apparently sufficient hours of daily sleep or have morning headaches and daytime sleepiness, you could have OSA; especially if

you are told you snore. Do you have any of these signs or symptoms? Consult your doctor.

OSA can be detected with a simple test where an apparatus is connected to the patient at night on his/her own bed. This device can monitor sleep patterns, the degree of airway obstruction and many other parameters associated with OSA. This is called a Sleep Apnoea Test.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE OSA?

The first step that is advocated is usually weight loss as well as certain lifestyle changes. Sometimes, surgery to open the airways is advised. The most commonly used treatment is called Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP). This involves wearing a mask while you are asleep. The idea is to keep air pressure confined within the breathing passages to keep your airway open.

OSA is linked with a number of risks as well as other medical problems and will require a full medical assessment by your doctor. Our advice is to look into treating more than just OSA itself. High blood pressure, stroke, heart attacks, heart rhythm abnormalities and heart failure are some associated health problems.

*EARLY DETECTION CAN  
SAVE YOUR LIFE!*



Dr Dinesh Nair graduated in 1996 from the National University of Ireland, Galway. He worked in Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK) before returning to Singapore to complete his Cardiology Advanced Specialty Training at the National Heart Centre (NHC). He moved to Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) in 2006, where he was the Director of the Coronary Care Unit.

Dr Nair currently admits and manages patients in Mount Elizabeth Hospital and Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital. His subspecialty is in Interventional Cardiology and Percutaneous Valve therapies and Complex Angioplasty/Stenting procedures. He is the Co-Director of the Valvular

therapeutics programme at the Parkway Heart and Vascular Centre and has published numerous scientific papers.

Dr Nair is fluent in English, Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Indonesia. He also has a working understanding of German, Malayalam, Tamil, Mandarin and Hokkien.

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**SLEEP  
APNOEA**  
WHAT IS IT?

# PAP SMEARS

FOR EARLY DETECTION!

## CERVICAL CANCER

SCREENING & PREVENTION

*See Competition Inside!*

WIN AN  
ALKALINE  
WATER  
IONISER

## ORAL CANCER

UNKNOWN AND RAPID  
KILLER ON THE RISE