

# Focus On: Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea happens when breathing stops for short periods during sleep. This usually occurs because your airways are blocked or partly blocked.

This is called obstructive sleep apnea.

Sleep apnea makes your heart and blood vessels work harder and can affect your heart and nervous system.

Symptoms you may notice include feeling unrefreshed or tired after a night's sleep. You may have problems with memory and concentration, or mood changes. Or you may wake up with a dry mouth or sore throat in the morning.

Others may notice that you have episodes of not breathing, you snore loudly, or you have nighttime choking or gasping spells.

Lifestyle changes, such as losing weight or changing your sleep position, may help some people with sleep apnea.

If lifestyle changes alone don't improve your symptoms, your doctor may recommend a positive airway pressure machine, such as a CPAP, that delivers air through a mask to help keep your airways open.

Or they may suggest an oral device or mouthpiece.

To learn more about sleep apnea, talk to your doctor.