

Heart failure is defined as a long-term condition in which the heart does not pump blood through your body as well as it should. Certain conditions like narrowed arteries in your heart (coronary artery disease) or high blood pressure over time make your heart too weak or stiff to fill and pump efficiently.

There are two forms of sleep apnea: obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and central sleep apnea (CSA). People can have both. OSA is a blockage of your airways that causes airflow to your lungs to stop while you are sleeping. CSA is due to a pause in your breathing from miscommunication between your brain and breathing muscles. These events repeatedly occur during the night and continue night after night, eventually affecting how your heart works.

Treating heart failure and sleep apnea can improve the quality of a patient's life.

Heart failure and sleep apnea have many of the same symptoms.

- **Waking up many times each night**
- **Going the bathroom frequently during the evening and during sleep**
- **Waking up short of breath or catching your breath**
- **Lack of energy**
- **Sexual dysfunction**
- **Feeling sleepy or tired all day**

What should I do about it?

Diagnosis - Sleep apnea is often first suspected by your family. Ask your bed partner if you snore, snort, gasp or struggle to breathe, or have pauses in breathing while you sleep. These are signs you may have sleep apnea. Let your doctor know so that they can

determine if you are at risk for sleep apnea. A sleep study is the test used to diagnose sleep apnea and other sleep conditions. These tests measure your heart rate, blood oxygen level, airflow and breathing patterns. If the results are not normal, your doctor will discuss treatment options.

What are the treatment options?

Treatment may include the following:

CPAP or BPAP – While wearing a mask during sleep the CPAP or BPAP machine moves air into the nasal passages at pressures high enough to allow normal breathing.

Weight loss – Weight loss helps to decrease the severity of sleep apnea.

Oxygen – The use of oxygen alone or in addition to PAP therapy can be used to treat some forms of sleep apnea.

Oral device – These devices enlarge the airway by pulling the jaw forward to allow for normal breathing.

Why do I need to be tested and treated?

Several research studies have shown that many patients with congestive heart failure experience the following benefits by treating their sleep apnea:

- Decrease the night time stress on your heart from apnea events.
- Improved cardiac function (your heart works better).
- Possibly slows the progression of your heart failure.
- Improves the quality of your life by relieving the symptoms of sleep apnea.

Talk to your physician about your sleep concerns and symptoms.