



## Health Advisory: Obstructive Sleep Apnea Screening

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a potentially lethal disease that increases the risk of numerous health problems, including cardiovascular disease. Patients with OSA who are diagnosed and treated with either positive airway pressure (PAP) therapy or an alternative treatment can experience improvements in their sleep quality, heart health and overall well-being.

It is imperative for primary care providers, cardiologists, bariatric surgeons, endocrinologists and other health care professionals to identify patients with symptoms of OSA. Common symptoms include snoring, gasping, choking, or silent pauses in breathing during sleep, and excessive daytime sleepiness or fatigue.

It is especially important for patients in high-risk groups to be screened using a validated OSA questionnaire (e.g., STOP-BANG or Berlin). Because “Sleep Apnea Hurts HEARTS,” the American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends an annual OSA screening for all adult patients who have:

- H** - heart failure
- E** - elevated blood pressure
- A** - atrial fibrillation (A-fib)
- R** - resistant hypertension
- T** - Type 2 diabetes
- S** - stroke

Additional patients who should be screened for OSA include those who are obese with a body mass index  $\geq 30$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>; those who have nocturnal dysrhythmias, pulmonary hypertension, or coronary artery disease; and those who are preparing for bariatric surgery.

Patients who have a high risk for OSA, based on an initial screening, should then receive a comprehensive sleep evaluation that includes an overnight sleep study in an accredited sleep center or a home sleep apnea test. Expertise in diagnosing and treating OSA is available from board-certified sleep medicine physicians.

REFERENCE: Aurora RN, Quan SF. [Quality measure for screening for adult obstructive sleep apnea by primary care physicians](#). J Clin Sleep Med 2016;12(8):1185–1187.

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The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) is a professional membership society that improves sleep health and promotes high quality, patient-centered care through advocacy, education, strategic research, and practice standards ([aasm.org](http://aasm.org)).

A searchable directory of AASM-accredited member sleep centers is available at [sleepeducation.org](http://sleepeducation.org).