

SNORING & SLEEP APNEA ?

Port Warwick Dental Arts Can Help

If you're snoring loudly at night and exhausted during the day, sleep apnea may be to blame. Sleep apnea, episodes when breathing stops during sleep, can wake you and your partner and cause you to fall asleep during the day. But sleep apnea is more than an annoyance – it can be fatal.

"You are literally suffocating in your sleep and have no awareness of it," says dentist Lisa Marie Samaha, owner of Port Warwick Dental Arts in Newport News, which treats sleep apnea. "Although most sleep apnea patients are overweight and older, this condition can afflict young people, thin people and children."

These episodes can last for 10 seconds or more – with the average being 18 seconds and the longest on record 138 seconds. About 17 percent of the population are sleep apnea patients, but many are undiagnosed. Untreated sleep apnea has been linked to heart attacks and strokes. Patients with untreated sleep apnea will die an average of 20 years sooner than those without sleep apnea, with an average age at death of 52, according to Samaha.

"The body goes into little bouts of shock all night long, creating total exhaustion for the individuals' entire body and mind," Samaha says.

Symptoms include loud snoring, and then waking up with a gasp; frequent silences during sleep; falling asleep during the day; and feeling exhausted even after what should have been a full night's sleep. "Sleep apnea can cause or contribute to high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, heart disease, short-term memory problems, weight gain, gastric reflux, dry mouth, sore throat and low energy," says Samaha.

Samaha and her highly trained staff at Port Warwick Dental Arts in Newport News have been helping sleep apnea patients breathe easier for 15 years. Patients wear a dental appliance that positions the lower jaw and tongue forward to keep the airway open all night. Samaha is one of only about 500 dentists in the United States specially trained



Harry Broskie, Newport News

to offer this treatment.

The practice focuses especially on people who are unable or unwilling to use a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine, which uses a hose to deliver compressed air to a nasal pillow, nose mask or face mask to keep the airway open all night. People might not be able to use a CPAP machine because of claustrophobia, aller-

gies to the materials the mask is made of, discomfort or embarrassment.

"We want to work alongside our patients' physicians to help add a new dimension to what is being offered," Samaha says. "We can help the patients who cannot or will not wear their CPAPs. We are also able to help about 90 percent of snorers stop snoring. There are so many people who want and need this kind of help."

For Harry Broskie of Newport News, seeing Dr. Samaha was life changing.

"Dr. Samaha gave me a referral to a sleep center and they told me I had the worst snoring and sleep problems they had ever seen," Broskie says. "That led me to their CPAP machine and other options, which were cumbersome and caused my sleep to be restless.

Dr. Samaha provided me with an oral appliance instead and my sleep improved considerably. I was able to fall asleep and wake up in the same position eight hours later. Soon, I was no longer exhausted all the time. I felt like I had my life back after many, many years."

Port Warwick Dental Arts also has FDA-approved equipment to allow patients to take a sleep study in the comfort of their own homes.

The difference after treatment is amazing. "Their depression goes away and they have an energy level they haven't known for years, sometimes decades," Samaha says.



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