

## Sleep Disorders and Cardiovascular Disease FAQ

**Q. Is there a link between Sleep Disorders and Cardiovascular Disease?**

**A.** Yes. Studies have associated sleep problems with an increase in cardiovascular risk including:

- Heart attacks
- Hypertension
- Strokes
- Irregular heart rhythms
- Heart failure
- Death

Proper treatment of sleep disorders can improve cardiovascular outcomes. Unfortunately this linkage is often unrecognized or ignored.

**Q. How do I know I have a Sleep Disorder?**

**A.** The following are symptoms of a possible Sleep Disorder:

- Feeling fatigued, taking naps
- Falling asleep during the day, having trouble concentrating
- Having been told that you snore, gasp for breath, or appear to stop breathing when you sleep

**Q. What problems indicate that I may have Cardiovascular Disease?**

**A.** The following are symptoms of a possible Cardiovascular Disease:

- Chest discomfort (pain, pressure)
- Shortness of breath
- Exercise intolerance
- Family history
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Excessive weight
- Snoring and other sleep disorders

**Q. Do women have a special problem?**

**A.** Yes. In contrast to men, women are less likely to report sleep problems like snoring and less likely to be treated for sleep disorders and cardiovascular disease.

**Q. What sleep problems can compromise my health?**

**A.** Sleep disorders encompass a spectrum of problems which can be hazardous. Snoring, breathing pauses at night and daytime sleepiness are signs of potentially life-threatening obstructive sleep apnea.

**Q. How can I lower my risk of Cardiovascular Disease?**

There are many factors that contribute to the risk for cardiovascular disease. Along with smoking cessation, controlling high blood pressure, lowering cholesterol level with proper diet and medication, losing excess weight through exercise and treating sleep disorders, your chances for being at risk for cardiovascular disease can be lowered.

If my heart has been evaluated, do I have to worry about sleep problems? Untreated, sleep problems can lessen the effectiveness of cardiac treatments. Both heart and sleep problems should be treated.

**Q. What if I still have questions about Sleep Disorders and Cardiovascular Disease?**

**A.** For more information, call the Center for Sleep Medicine at 201-894-3154.