

Health Risks of OSA

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a serious condition. Left untreated, it can lead to a host of health issues—negatively affecting the body and mind.



High Blood Pressure

Oxygen levels in the body drop due to sleep apnea. When oxygen remains low, adrenaline levels increase. This adrenaline can contribute to high blood pressure, as well as anxiety, heart palpitations or trouble sleeping. Left unchecked, high blood pressure can increase the risk for heart attack, heart failure and stroke.



Stroke

Untreated OSA increases the risk for stroke. High blood pressure, which is also a common side effect of untreated sleep apnea, also increases stroke risk.



Heart Issues

Studies suggest that untreated OSA increases the risk of congestive heart failure, atrial fibrillation and coronary artery disease.



Blood Sugar & Metabolism

Obstructive sleep apnea can cause insulin resistance and alter glucose metabolism. Untreated OSA can also increase a person's risk of becoming diabetic or experiencing other issues with blood sugar, glycemic control and metabolism.



Cancer

People with OSA are far more likely to get cancer than those who do not have OSA. Untreated OSA may also promote tumor growth.



Mental Health & Alzheimer's

Obstructive sleep apnea has been associated with depression and mood issues. It may also be associated with increased risk for Alzheimer's Disease.



Impaired Cognitive Functioning

Untreated OSA has also been associated with an increase in cognitive dysfunction. What this means is that an untreated sleep apnea sufferer may experience issues with thinking, reasoning and memory, as well as brain fog.



Fatigue & Accidents

Because OSA can cause daytime sleepiness and fatigue, those with OSA are at greater risk of getting into car crashes and other accidents. Sleep deprivation also impairs reaction times, which can put you at higher risk of accidents.

In addition, excessive daytime sleepiness and fatigue affect productivity levels as well as energy levels throughout the day.



Immune Health

Sleep helps to naturally support the immune system. When you're not getting enough quality sleep, your immunity suffers, and you may become more susceptible to catching colds and viruses.

The good news is OSA is completely treatable. Talk with your physician about your sleep and get the help you need today to eliminate sleepless nights and exhausted days. Your body and mind will thank you.

American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine educational information provided to you by your dentist.