

# Obstructive Sleep Apnoea Syndrome

## What You Need to Know

Symptoms include: daytime sleepiness/tiredness, loud snoring, stopping breathing during sleep, raised blood pressure

### What is obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA)?

OSA is a condition that affects breathing during sleep, with partial or total closure of the airway behind the tongue. This causes:

- Your body to wake up sometimes hundreds of times a night
- Poor sleep quality

But you are not likely to be aware this is happening.

### Could you have OSAS?

Because OSA occurs when you are asleep, it can be hard to recognise whether you might have it or not. While those with mild OSA are often able to carry on with their lives normally, those suffering from OSAS will experience negative effects on their day-to-day lives.

### Who does it affect most?

It's thought that around 5% of the population are sufferers of OSAS, and the risk increases with age. Those at highest risk (but not exclusively) are:

- Male
- Overweight
- Middle-aged

### What should I do if I think I have OSAS?

Either make an appointment with your GP, describe your symptoms, and say why you think you have obstructive sleep apnoea. Specialist assessment should then be organised. Alternatively your employer may have a scheme to screen for OSAS. **Treatment** with continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is very effective.

### Obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome (OSAS)

OSAS is when OSA is bad enough to cause excessive daytime sleepiness. The results of this excessive sleepiness (or tiredness) are:

- Reduced concentration and vigilance (e.g. while driving)
- Greatly reduced quality of life
- Reduced 'get up and go'

### Do you recognise these symptoms?

- Waking up feeling unrefreshed
- Frequent loud snoring
- Others have noticed you stopping breathing while asleep sometimes
- Frequent trips to the bathroom during the night
- Excessively sleepy and tired during the day.



- Treatment abolishes the symptoms that are due to poor sleep
- Treatment greatly improves quality of life
- If there are any sleepiness symptoms sufficient to impair driving, then of course driving should stop temporarily
- Following treatment driving can commence normally again.

Further information:

There are some good websites about OSAS worth looking at:

<http://www.sleep-apnoea-trust.org/>

<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/osa>

<http://www.osapartnershipgroup.co.uk/index.html>

<http://myosa.resmed.com>