

Finding Out the Origins and Treatments for Sleep Apnea

Contributed by Webmaster

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When a person gets home from work or whatever else they have been doing each day, chances are that they are pretty tired. They might make dinner, watch some television, and then go to bed to rest up for the next day. Sleep is something that many people take for granted, thinking that simply because they can fall asleep at night and get their eight hours or more per night, they are fine.

However, there are various disorders such as sleep apnea that occur while a person is asleep, and he or she might not even know it. In order to understand how various sleep disorders such as sleep apnea occur, it is important to first understand, basically, what happens when a person falls asleep.

During slumber, the brainwaves will change from a high state (which occurs while the person is awake) to a lower state, which occurs when a person is sound asleep. The brain, specifically the parasympathetic nervous system, is what controls the breathing at all times. In the case of sleep apnea, something occurs to the parasympathetic nervous system that makes the person stop breathing for a minute or, in more extreme cases, a few minutes at a time.

There are various causes of sleep apnea, the first of which has to do with obesity. When a person is significantly overweight, then they are putting a lot of pressure on their body, specifically the heart. The heart, in an effort to compensate for the extra weight gain, starts beating harder. However, all of that extra beating can result in lower oxygen and brain function, which then sends the wrong messages to the parasympathetic nervous system.

Another cause of this sleep disorder has to do with blocked breathing passages, specifically the throat. When a person has an excess amount of tissue in their breathing passages, this is yet another way that the lack of oxygen causes the parasympathetic nervous system to receive the wrong messages.

The problem is in figuring out whether or not the person actually has this sleeping disorder, since they themselves might not be aware of it. If a person has a significant other, then that is one way that the person can be alerted to this. However, if the person sleeps alone, then there are still some ways that he or she might be able to ascertain if they are suffering from this sleep disorder.

For example, if a person gets eight hours of sleep a night, but at the same time wakes up still feeling very tired, that is an indication of this sleep disorder. Additionally, if the person frequently finds themselves being forgetful, then that is also an indication that the brain is not getting the proper amount of oxygen during sleep.

However, those symptoms can also be indicative of other medical problems, so how can a person tell for sure? It is very important that the person receive the proper diagnosis, because if left untreated, this sleep disorder can become fatal. So, the person might be asked to participate in a sleep clinic. Treatment is usually in the form of medication, or in the case of obese patients, weight loss.

More information on sleep apnea, insomnia and a sleep center is just a click away.