

Good News for Many!!!

March can come in like a lion and go out like a lamb. March is the time we begin to think of hopefully putting away snow shovels and bringing out golf clubs. March is the month that also saw the first marching of the green in a St. Patrick's Day parade. That first parade was not in Ireland. Irish soldiers serving in the English military got together and marched through New York City on March 17th in 1762. Today, over three million people line the streets to watch the procession that lasts for hours. In more recent years, several other US cities have literally joined the parade. Savannah and Chicago have dyed their rivers green for the day.

The day after is plagued with headaches and sleepiness by many over-celebrators. Unfortunately, a week later, a percentage of those who were sleepy.....still are.

The National Institute of Health estimates that 22 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea, and even more suffer from almost daily headaches. If you fit either of these two statistics...there may be some very easy help for you. Sleep apnea is not just an inconvenience because you may be tired. Sleep apnea has been studied extensively in recent medical history of the past decade. It now is understood, and well documented in university research, that sleep apnea can cause type 2 diabetes, stroke, fibromyalgia, high blood pressure, concentration problems, and a multitude of other dangerous medical conditions including heart attack and death. That sounds ominous and it is. However, there is very good news also. Although sleep apnea is extremely dangerous over time... it is easily is controllable.

What is obstructive sleep apnea?
Quite simply, it is a condition where

air can't get from the room in which you are sleeping and travel into your lungs. The back of your throat relaxes too much and pinches off the airway causing you not to be able to breathe. It's like crimping a garden hose to stop the water flow so that you can move the sprinkler without getting wet. Only when the throat is crimped, you do not get the oxygen you need in any part of your body that needs it. That's why obstructive sleep apnea can eventually cause so many medical maladies. No oxygen in any cell makes that cell weak. If the cell is in your heart or circulatory system...high blood pressure, stroke, or heart attack can occur.

So what's the good news? All of those cells that have been depleted of oxygen because you snore and have sleep apnea, can get a boost every night if you can just breathe correctly. There are three ways to keep your airway open while you are snoozing. 1) Surgery can open up and enlarge the small and collapsible airway. 2) A mask that blows air into your nose and mouth can keep the airway blown open like a balloon while you sleep, 3) For those who do not choose surgery or who don't want to wear a mask on their face while sleeping, there is an alternative. The FDA has approved several patented mouthpieces that position the jaw and tongue so that the soft tissue doesn't collapse while it relaxes and pinch off the airway.

If you are interested in learning about Obstructive Sleep Apnea, the problems it can cause, and how it can be treated...simply access our website at michiganheadandneck.com or call 586-573-0438 to request information.

Dr. Richard Klein

Michigan Head and Neck Institute. Treats sleep apnea and head and neck TMD pain and dysfunction. (586) 573-0438