Why You Should Take Sleep Apnea Seriously

More deadly than once believed, the condition affects 1 in 5 older adults

We all know that sleep apnea, not unlike a partner snoring in bed beside you, can easily disrupt a good night’s rest. Increasingly, the condition — defined as the repeated stopping and starting of your breathing while you sleep — is also being understood as a serious risk to your health.

Untreated sleep apnea has been linked to high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, liver problems and possibly even dementia. Research has also shown that older adults with excessive daytime sleepiness and moderate to severe sleep apnea are more than twice as likely to die as those who don’t have it.

But despite these life-threatening risks, many aren’t even aware that they’re vulnerable. While more than half of people over the age of 65 are at high risk for obstructive sleep apnea, the most common type of the disorder, only 8 percent were tested for it, according to a recent University of Michigan study. “When people think of sleep apnea, they picture an obese male who snores, but this stereotype falls apart with age,” says Reena Mehra, M.D., a sleep specialist and the director of Sleep Disorders Research at the Cleveland Clinic. “Post-menopausal women, for example, have an increased likelihood when compared to premenopausal women.”

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SLEEP APNEA
FROM PAGE 1

Sleep apnea is often overlooked because its symptoms can be subtle. “The most obvious signs are snoring and waking up gasping for air — or being told by your partner that you do this — but there are other signs to be aware of, such as not waking up feeling rested, a morning headache that dissipates after you start moving around, difficulty concentrating or just not feeling as sharp as you used to,” says Eric Olson, M.D., a sleep specialist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. If you’re having trouble getting blood pressure under control, even if you’re on multiple medications, that’s also a warning sign, he adds.

If any of the above signs sound familiar, ask your primary care physician to refer you to a specialist so you can be evaluated. Most of the time, a sleep test, or polysomnography, is conducted overnight at a sleep center. As you get ready for bed, a technician places sensors on your scalp, temples, chest and legs, as well as a small clip on your finger or ear. These are all hooked up to a computer so that the lab can monitor your brain waves, eye movements, heart rate, breathing patterns and blood oxygen levels as you doze.

If you’re wary of spending the night in a strange bed and being hooked up to an array of equipment (although some centers do them at hotels now, where you can snooze in luxury), then you can ask your doctor about possibly doing a home test. In this case, you’ll simply pick up a small portable monitor at your local sleep center and then put it on at home. (This usually involves placing a belt around your chest, attaching a clip to your finger and putting an airflow sensor in your nose.) When you return the device, the technician analyzes the results.

But keep in mind that such an at-home test will only pick up sleep apnea in the most severe cases. “If you’re a 65-year-old overweight man who snores, and your wife reports you sometimes stop breathing and gasp for air at night, then you have a high likelihood of having obstructive sleep apnea. And it’ll show up on a home test,” Mehra says. “But if you’re a 55-year-old thin woman, it may be less clear, and a home test may be inconclusive.” In that case, you’re better off going to a sleep center for the test.

If you’ve got sleep apnea, lifestyle changes such as losing weight, avoiding alcohol before bedtime and quitting smoking can help. But the gold standard of treatment is continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), in which a mask connected to a pump blows air into your throat to keep the airway open. If you wear one, a lot of the risks associated with sleep apnea can be dramatically reduced: A 2014 study published in the medical journal Sleep found that people who used a CPAP machine for just three months experienced a significant reduction in blood pressure.

But a 2016 review of studies published in the Journal of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery found that more than a third of all people prescribed a CPAP machine don’t stick with using one. “They can be uncomfortable to wear because they can cause symptoms like a stuffy nose or dry mouth. But if one mask doesn’t work for you, there are definitely other options,” Mehra says.

If you’re a mouth breather, for example, you may do better with a full-face mask that covers your mouth and nose. You can also opt for a CPAP-heated humidifier, which attaches to the air pressure machine to keep air moist, so you don’t wake up with a dry mouth. If you tend to get claustrophobic, look for a mask with a nasal pillow that fits under your nose so that it covers less of your face. “Like buying shoes, it can take a while to figure out the brand, size and style that you like,” Olson says. If you’ve tried several different masks and are still miserable, talk to your physician or provider about other options, such as a mouthpiece if you have mild sleep apnea, or even surgery if your apnea is severe.

Help for snoring

More than 37 million Americans snore regularly — meaning there’s an excellent chance that you or your partner keep one another up with awful buzz saw-like sounds. “As you get older, increased weight and/or decreased throat muscle tone can cause your throat to narrow during sleep and trigger snoring,” Olson says. Here’s how to find relief:

• Lose weight. Fat around your neck compresses your upper airway, triggering snoring.

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2019 AARP TAX ASSISTANCE SITES

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PLEASE DO NOT CALL ANY SITE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT OR REQUEST TAX INFORMATION
SLEEP APNEA

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Olson says. Even shedding just five to 10 pounds can help.

• Sleep on your side. When you lie on your back, your tongue falls backward, blocking your airways. To keep from rolling back onto your back when you snooze, place a T-shirt stuffed with tennis balls or old balled-up socks alongside you.

• Elevate your head. Propping up the head of your bed by four or more inches can take pressure off your airway so that it’s easier to breathe while you sleep.

• Try an OTC nasal strip. If your honking is caused by a stuffy nose, nasal irritation with saline before bed may help. Then apply over-the-counter nasal strips to help keep nasal passages open, Olson advises. You may want to consider adding a humidifier to your bedroom in order to keep the air moist. You can also try an OTC prescription steroid spray if you have chronic congestion due to allergies.

• Don’t nod off with a nightcap. Alcohol relaxes throat muscles, which can trigger snoring. If you want to enjoy an evening cocktail, be sure to close down the bar at least three to four hours before bedtime.

If your snoring doesn’t ease off despite these efforts and/or your snoring is accompanied by excessive daytime sleepiness (so you frequently find yourself nodding off, for example, when you sit down or even when driving a car), see your doctor to get evaluated for sleep apnea.

Source: AARP, January 25, 2019

On a personal note...

I can attest to the importance of being tested for sleep apnea. Just recently I was diagnosed with sleep apnea. Having been told by family members that I snored, I also noticed additional symptoms that led me to believe I should talk to my doctor. During the night I would wake myself up gasping for air; my mouth would be extremely dry from breathing through my mouth; and I seemed to be excessively tired during the day. I tried the nasal strips hoping they would help with keeping my nasal passages open, but I would wake up with the strip on my cheek or in my hair. I already slept with my head elevated, so that didn’t help; nor did sleeping on my side. I’ve been using my CPAP now for five weeks and I’m amazed at how much better I feel. In talking to others that have been using the CPAP for years, they said they have used it every night since starting on it because of how much better they felt.

Meeting the Deductible and other New Year treats

by Jackie Dover

I need to get my eyes checked. After hours on the computer and on my phone, I have blurry vision and I am getting headaches. I put off going to the eye doctor during the busy holiday season and now wish I had fit a visit in my schedule, now I have to meet my insurance deductible. Most insurances have a deductible; a deductible is the amount you pay for covered medical expenses before your insurance begins to pick up any charges. Medicare can have more than one deductible.

Medicare Part A, which is the in-patient or hospital part of Medicare, has a deductible of $1,364 per benefit period in 2019. What this means for a Medicare client is they pay $1,364 if they are admitted as an in-patient at a hospital. The Medicare Part A benefit period begins when you are admitted to a facility and ends when you have not received inpatient hospital or Medicare-covered skilled care in a skilled nursing facility for 60 days in a row. The benefit period is not tied to the calendar year, and you can have multiple Part A deductibles in a year.

Medicare Part B also has a deductible, for 2019, it is $185. The Part B deductible is for the year and will reset each January. After the deductible has been met, Medicare covers 80% of approved Medicare costs.

Medicare Part D, the prescription part of Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C), have varying deductibles based on the plan selected. There is a deductible maximum of $415 per calendar year in 2019, for Part D plans.

There are programs that can help pay for Medicare deductibles if you qualify. They are based on income and asset levels. For help with the Medicare Part D deductible a couple’s income would need to be below $24,930 a year and assets under $28,720 and a single person with income under $18,450 and assets under $14,390.

There has been much discussion about the Missouri Property Tax Credit (MO-PTC) also known as the Circuit Breaker. This program is a refundable tax credit for seniors or those who are 100% disabled, it refunds a portion of the paid real estate tax or paid rent. The amount returned is based on taxes/rent paid and total household income. For renters income limit is $27,500 for a single person and $29,500 for a married couple. If you own your home, the limit is $30,000 for a single person and $34,000 for a couple.

If you have questions or more information, please call Aging Matters 800-392-8771.
Holy Cow!

What a great way to save time for Family Caregivers and other busy people! by Kathy Bullis

Many of our lives are compounded not only by raising children, or helping with grandchildren, but also caring for aging parents, spouses or other relatives and loved ones. Caregivers can often be overwhelmed by how much there is to do and how little time there is to do it. On average family caregivers spend as much as 13 days each month on shopping, food preparation, housekeeping, laundry transportation, and medication management according to Gallup-Healthways. (2011).

And to break that down a little more, an average shopping trip takes 41 minutes and people make 1.5 trips per week which adds up to over 53 hours per year just in grocery shopping, according to the Time Use Institute. Imagine how helpful it would be to reduce that block of time.

Technological advances and new ideas on how to put them to use may provide many solutions for a caregiver’s busy life. One new advance is that stores have begun to offer “curb side” pickup or home delivered groceries. Let’s take a look at some the currently available services and some of the shortcomings and benefits of these services.

Shortcomings:
- Internet access is necessary.
- There may be a fee.
- Orders need to be placed in advance.
- Services are not available everywhere.

Benefits:
- Significant time savings.
- Easier to take an aging loved one with you if your using curb pick up because you don’t have to leave the car.
- Savings because impulse buying is less tempting. Personally I find I spend about $25 less on curb pick up orders.
- Encourages meal planning.
- May be easier to take advantage of deals / discounts.
- May make shopping with mobility issues and other disabilities easier for the shopper.
- Reduces caregiver fatigue. Who wouldn’t want to patiently sit in their car instead of hiking to the back 40 of the local grocery for that gallon of milk and all of the other items that always seem to be at the farthest corners?

Home delivery may offer a solution for those who have no transportation, or can’t drive.

Some stores offering these services are:
- Walmart – offers “Walmart Free Grocery Pickup” and home delivery in some locations, but not all. To find locations near you, go to the Walmart app and type in your zip code.
  - Walmart stores in our area offering free grocery pick up are located in Cape Girardeau, Desloge, Farmington, and Poplar Bluff.
  - Fees – none for Grocery Pickup, however there are fees charged for home delivered groceries.
- Aldi – offers home delivered groceries through the app “Instacart.”
  - Aldi stores in our area offering home delivery are located in Cape Girardeau, Farmington, and Poplar Bluff.
  - Fee – fees are charged for home delivery.
- Schnucks – offers home delivered groceries through the app “Instacart.”
  - Schnucks stores in our area offering home delivery are located in Cape Girardeau and Farmington.
  - Fee – fees charged for home delivery.
- Target – offers “Target Drive Up.”
  - The only Target in our area offering Target pick up is located in Cape Girardeau.
  - Fees – no fees charged for Target drive up.

You may want to check the web sites frequently for these businesses as they are being expanded, new locations may be added, and other changes may be made to existing programs. If you can make use of these services, I would encourage you to try them; I have and have found them to be very helpful.
ONE INCIDENT AWAY …
Help in the Home Provides Reassurance

Veronica and her mother Wilma lived together in a quaint downtown apartment. Veronica had been the primary caregiver for her mom for some time, despite having a full time job. She helped with household chores, meal preparation, errands, and some personal care. When Wilma fell victim to a stroke, Veronica’s caregiving role suddenly became more than she could manage. Veronica reached out to their local Area Agency on Aging for assistance and Care Coordinator Amanda was assigned to the case. Amanda was able to provide a few hours of in-home services which included bathing and light housework, as well as home-delivered meals. Wilma also received financial assistance to purchase a pair of desperately needed eyeglasses that would enable her to get around easier.

“I was so relieved that mom was receiving a noon meal and had someone checking in on her while I was at work. Although never a burden, I had a bit of respite relief that got me through each day,” Veronica commented with a sigh of relief.

As time went by, Wilma recovered tremendously and in-home services were no longer needed. They were both very thankful for the help of their Area Agency on Aging and were glad to be removed from services so another person in need could be helped.

Note: You or someone you know may find yourself in a situation similar to Veronica and her mother Wilma, and need assistance in the home. Various services are available through the In-Home Services Program at Aging Matters. For instance, if you can no longer perform basic household chores or need help with bathing and medically related tasks, in-home services could provide that much needed assistance, enabling you to remain living in your own home.

To see if you qualify for help, contact Shirley Bentley at 573-335-3331 or 800-392-8771, Ext. 116.

Older Missourians are just ONE INCIDENT AWAY from hospitalization, nursing home placement, and the loss of lifetime resources. The In-Home Services Program at Aging Matters is here to help.

ONE INCIDENT AWAY …
Resources and Programs Provide Peace of Mind

Long-Term Care Ombudsmen is just one of many programs that Area Agencies on Aging partner with and offer. It is the efforts of these senior advocate volunteers that helped turn Paul’s life around. Paul’s wife Hazel was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and was in need of skilled nursing care. The Ombudsman program helped guide Paul in choosing a facility that met his wife’s memory care needs; however, Paul was worried about the cost of care and fearful he would be homeless himself.

The resources and knowledge of Area Agencies on Aging provide peace of mind for many seniors like Paul. He benefited from newfound knowledge of community resources and programs that can assist seniors in making informed decisions suited for their individual circumstances and lifestyles.

Your Area Agency on Aging in Missouri has expert help.

“We want to be here when you need us.”

For information about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at Aging Matters contact Jan McFeron at 573-335-3331, Ext. 115 or 800-392-8771, Ext. 115.

Note: For 35 years Americare, has been listening to what matters most to our residents and their loved ones. Again and again, we’ve heard about the importance of our consistent, caring staff…our warm, intimate setting that feels like home…our way of attending to the smallest details…and a very real sense that your family is part of our family.

Come find out what our experience has taught us. We know the best decisions aren’t made in a crisis – so why wait for one? We know how to help families, even if Americare is not the best fit. There’s no obligation. We’re here to help.

Contact Jennifer Berck for more information: 573.382.1978 or jberck@americareusa.net
Cape Girardeau, Farmington, Kennett, Poplar Bluff, Ste. Genevieve & Sikeston
www.americareusa.net
Bread – More than Just a Food

Think of some of the different meanings of the word bread. Your “bread and butter” is usually your main source of income; “bread” or “dough” can refer to money; and when we “break bread” together we are sharing a meal and usually a time of fellowship. Bread is mentioned in the Bible almost 500 times! Bread is not only a staple food in many countries, but in all its various forms it is the most widely consumed food in the world. It has been an integral part of the human diet for thousands of years, with recent research suggesting humans have been baking bread for about 30,000 years. Over the centuries it has traveled and changed just as the human species has moved across the globe and changed. Bread’s portability, convenience, nutrition and taste have all contributed to its longevity as such an important part of the human diet. There are many, many types and varieties of bread from the tall, fluffy loaves most Americans are familiar with to heartier, darker whole grain breads, to flatbreads like naan or tortillas, to rustic and chewy baguettes and Ciabatta and to varieties of bread. Faced with so many choices, how do you select the most nutritious bread products? The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that at least half of your breads and other grain-based foods, including cereals, crackers, and pasta, should be whole grain. Grains are either whole or refined. Whole grains contain the entire kernel, including the endosperm, bran, and germ. Refined grains have been processed to remove the bran and germ which removes dietary fiber, iron and other nutrients. Diets rich in whole grains are associated with a variety of health benefits. The fiber in whole grains cause the body to digest food more slowly, leading to feeling fuller longer and less drastic spikes in blood sugar. Eating whole grains consistently can also help to lower inflammation, a key factor in many chronic diseases. Choosing a better bread requires some label reading and knowing what to look for. Looks can be deceiving. A bread’s darker brown color does not necessarily mean it is whole grain. That color may be from added food coloring. Label claims like “Multi-Grain” or “Seven Grain” for example, indicate that more than one type of grain is used in the bread, but does not mean the grains are whole grain. The only way to know for sure is to read the ingredients label. The first ingredient of a truly whole-grain bread should be “whole wheat” or “whole-grain rye” or “whole” whatever grain the bread is made from. The best indicator are the words “100% whole grain/wheat.” Manufacturers are allowed to say “whole grain” if the bread contains only 51% or more of whole grain flour. The label claim “Made with whole grains” usually means the bread product contains some, but not all, whole grain flour, as well. You can look for the Whole Grain stamp from the Whole Grains Council to let you know exactly how many grams of whole grain each serving of the bread product contains. One serving is considered to be 16 grams of whole grain and you should aim for 3 servings, 48 grams, each day. Visit wholegrainscouncil.org for more information. You should also compare the amount of sodium (salt), and added sugars in the different bread products. And

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finally, just because any food, including bread, is “healthy”, you are unlikely to eat it unless it also tastes and looks good. You may need to try several different varieties to find the product or products that you and your family prefer. I prefer a heartier whole grain bread, while my husband prefers Wonder 100% Whole Wheat bread that has the softer texture he grew up with. Considering the huge number and variety of bread products available today, with a little research and taste testing, you should be able to find healthier varieties of bread and bread products that you and your family can enjoy as part of a balanced, healthy diet.

### Recipes

**Whole Wheat Dinner Rolls (from Taste of Home)**

**Ingredients**
- 1-1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 package (1/4 ounce) active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup butter, cubed
- 1 egg
- 2 to 2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- Canola oil, optional

**Directions**
- In a large bowl, combine the whole wheat flour, sugar, yeast and salt; set aside. In a large saucepan, heat milk, water and butter to 120°-130° add to dry ingredients; beat just until moistened. Add egg; beat until smooth. Stir in enough all-purpose flour to form a soft dough.
- Turn onto a floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl; turn once to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.
- Punch dough down; shape into 12 balls. Place in a greased 9-in. square baking pan. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 1 hour. Brush tops with oil if desired.
- Bake at 400° for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. Cover loosely with foil if top browns too quickly. Remove from pan to a wire rack to cool.

**YIELD:** 1 dozen

Here are a few quick tips to convert your favorite recipes to whole grain:
- In cookies, scones, pancakes, muffins, and quick breads (like banana bread), feel free to substitute whole grain flour for all-purpose flour one-to-one, without making other changes.
- In yeast breads that need to rise, feel free to substitute whole wheat flour for half of the all-purpose flour one-to-one, without making other changes.
- To make yeast breads 100% whole wheat, add an extra 2 teaspoons liquid per cup of whole wheat flour, and let the dough rest for 25 minutes before kneading.
- White whole wheat flour and fresh whole wheat flour (as opposed to flour that has been in your pantry for several months) tend to have the sweetest, mildest flavors.
- Work your way up slowly, gradually replacing more and more of the all-purpose flour with whole grain flour.
Shop at AmazonSmile to support Aging Matters

The AmazonSmile Foundation has donated over $105 million to eligible charities as of October 2018. If you are an Amazon shopper, you can add to that amount by simply going to smile.amazon.com and entering Southeast Missouri Area Agency on Aging in the search option. You use your existing Amazon account settings when logging in. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll have the exact same shopping experience and same low prices that you had with amazon.com. The only difference is that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchase to Southeast Missouri Area Agency on Aging, at no cost to you. Products eligible for donation will be marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages.

This is an easy way for you and others to support Aging Matters every time you shop. Tell all your family and friends that are also Amazon shoppers about this simple step everyone can take to provide support for Aging Matters!