Sleep Study
Frequently Asked Questions

What Causes Snoring?
Snoring is the sound made by air passing through irregularities and narrowing in the throat and/or windpipe. Snoring can occur when someone breathes in or breathes out. Snoring may have many causes.

- Snoring is often related to physical obstructive breathing during sleep or something blocking the breathing area.
- This blocking occurs when the muscles of the palate or upper mouth, the uvula, and sometimes the tonsils relax during sleep. They act as vibrating noisemakers when the air of breathing moves across them.
- There may be excessive bulkiness of tissue in the back of the throat as it narrows into the airways.
- There may be a long palate or upper mouth and/or uvula.
- Deformities of the nose or nasal septum may cause snoring. Deviated septum is a common term for the deformity of the wall inside the nose that separates one nostril from the other.
- Large tonsils and adenoids can cause snoring in children.
- Alcohol or drugs may relax muscles too much so that the tongue falls backwards into the airway or the throat muscles draw in from the sides into the airway. This can also happen during deep sleep.
- A stuffy or blocked-up nose may cause snoring for some people who do not snore otherwise. This may occur during hay fever season or during a cold or sinus infection.
- Cysts or tumors could be present near the airway, but these are rare.

Is Snoring Serious?
Yes, snoring is serious both socially and medically. Socially, snoring can cause embarrassment. It can disrupt the sleep of loved ones, many of whom choose to sleep separately from their partner, which can cause immense strain on a relationship.

Snoring is also a medical issue, because it disturbs your sleeping patterns and deprives you of appropriate rest. When snoring is severe, it can cause serious, long-term health problems, including sleep apnea.
Can Snoring Be Cured?
The majority of snorers can find relief. If you are a heavy snorer, or have been told you are a heavy snorer and you may think you are suffering from sleep apnea, you need a thorough examination of your nose, mouth, palate, throat, and neck. Studies in a sleep laboratory will determine how serious the snoring is and what effects it has on your health. Treatments may include lifestyle changes, breathing aid devices and medications.

If you suffer from mild or occasional snoring, you may want to try these self-help remedies:
- Adopt a healthy and athletic lifestyle to develop good muscle tone and lose weight.
- Avoid tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and antihistamines before bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol for at least four hours and heavy meals or snacks for three hours before retiring.
- Establish regular sleeping patterns.
- Sleep on your side rather than your back.
- Tilt the head of your bed upwards four inches.

What is Sleep Apnea?
Sleep apnea occurs when you regularly stop breathing for 10 seconds or longer during sleep. It can be mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the number of times in an hour that your breathing stops (apnea) or becomes very shallow (hypopnea). Apnea episodes may occur from 5 to more than 100 times an hour.
Untreated Obstructive Sleep Apnea can be life threatening; consequences may include high blood pressure and other cardiovascular complications including stroke.

There are three types of sleep apnea
1. **Obstructive sleep apnea** is the most common type is due to an obstruction in the throat during sleep. Bed partners notice pauses approximately 10 to 60 seconds between snores. It occurs when the muscles of the throat relax, thus obstructing the free flow of air in and out of the nose and/or mouth. Obstructive sleep apnea can result from many causes, including being overweight, defects in the airway such as enlarged tonsils or adenoids, an unusually narrow throat, and other factors. Men are affected by the condition more often than women are, and most cases are diagnosed in those over age 40 (although children can suffer from sleep apnea as well).
2. **Central sleep apnea** occurs when the brain fails to send the appropriate signals to the muscles that control breathing. This form of the condition is rare in otherwise healthy people, usually occurring only in people who are seriously ill with other conditions, particularly injuries to the brain stem, which controls breathing.
3. **Mixed sleep apnea** is a combination of the other two forms.
What is a sleep study?
A sleep study is a specialized test used to diagnose sleep disorders. As the name implies, it is done during sleep.

How do I prepare for a sleep study?
On the day of the study, please avoid taking naps. You may maintain a semi-normal diet routine. You should eat dinner before arriving at the sleep lab since no meals will be provided. Avoid any caffeine or alcohol after 2:00 p.m. on the day of your study. On the day of the study after bathing, you may wash your hair with shampoo, but please do not use hair products including gels, creams and sprays, skin lotion, face makeup, fingernail polish or acrylic nails as they interfere with the special glue used to hold the electrodes to your scalp. Men who are normally clean-shaven should shave well before coming in.

If excessive daytime sleepiness is one of your difficulties, please arrange to have someone drive you to and from your appointment. Remember that excessive daytime sleepiness may be dangerous to you and others when you drive.

What should I bring?
- Insurance card(s) and another form of ID
- Completed forms
- Appropriate and comfortable nightclothes (such as T-shirts and sweat pants or pajama top and bottoms)
- Robe and slippers, if you require them
- Your own pillow so you will have a familiar comfort from home
- Blankets and pillows will be provided by the Sleep Lab
- A list of current medications and doses
- All prescription and non-prescription medications you will need (You will need to be able to self-administer all medications, as our staff will not be able to dispense any medications to you.)
- A snack, if needed for special dietary reasons
- A change of clothes, if you want, for the next day
- Something to read or work on while awake during the non-sleep periods
- Personal toiletries
- Hair dryer

Will I have a private bedroom?
Yes and a private bathroom. Fresh Towels and washcloths will be provided. There is a shower facility available.
What about medications?
Please take your medications as usual and bring them to the center if necessary. We also recommend that you discuss your medications with your physician. Our staff will not be able to dispense any medications to you.

Should I have dinner?
Please eat dinner before arrival. You may bring a snack if you wish. Dinner will not be provided. Water and juice will be available in the evening and coffee, juice, fruit and muffins in the morning. If you are scheduled to stay the following day for additional testing, breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Should I take a shower before the study?
Yes, you may find that a shower before arriving at the Sleep Center will make you feel more relaxed. It is important that your skin and hair is clean and dry. Wash and dry your hair and do not apply any creams, lotions, sprays, oils, gels, or make-up. You may apply deodorant. Electrodes and paste will be placed on your scalp, so it will be necessary for your hairstyle to be accommodating for the study. Do not have your hair done the day of testing. Your hair will be messed up the next morning, but all the paste washes out easily.

Can I have a nap?
It is important that you avoid napping on the day of the study.

Can I have caffeine?
Avoid caffeine (coffee, colas, chocolates, etc.) at least four hours prior to your study.

Can I smoke?
Our center is a non-smoking facility, and smoking in the building is prohibited at all times. If you want to smoke, you must do so outside of the building at least 30 minutes prior to testing. Smoking during the testing or in the middle of the night is not allowed.

What if I am running late?
Please contact our sleep center directly and let us know of your approximate time of arrival. You can leave a message at (315) 492-5877.

Can I wear nail polish?
If you wear nail polish please remove it from at least one finger to obtain a good signal from the oxygen sensor. The sensor has a particularly hard time reading through acrylic nails and dark colored nail polish.
What if I have special needs?
Please call our office, in advance of your testing, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday at (315) 492-5877. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the sleep study procedure. If you use a walker or wheelchair, we can accommodate you. Our facility is handicap accessible. If you need assistance with the restroom during the night or special care, please call our office to discuss arranging a family member or caregiver to stay with you for the night. We will arrange for your caregiver to sleep in a room close by or in your room in a recliner. Please note that we do not have nurses on staff in the Sleep Center.

How will the electrodes be applied?
We will use an electrode paste, which is water-soluble and can be easily removed in the morning after testing. Medi-pore tape may be used to help secure some electrodes. This tape is hypoallergenic, latex free and removes easily.

Will I be able to sleep with the electrodes and wires?
You may find them a bit strange at first, but most people do not find them uncomfortable or an obstacle to falling asleep. We will make every effort to make sure that you are as comfortable as possible. If a problem arises, our technologist will make adjustments. Every bedroom has an intercom that will enable you to communicate with our technologist at any time. If you need to use the bathroom during the night, our technologists will assist and disconnect you temporarily. Throughout the night, try to sleep as normally as possible.

When will I wake up?
If you are not already awake you will be awakened at approximately 6:00 a.m. If you need to have a ride come and pick you up, please make arrangements to be picked up by 7:00 a.m. We are able to make exceptions if necessary; however we will need to know in advance.

When can I leave the Sleep Center?
Once you wake up, you will need to schedule an additional 30 minutes to your usual morning preparation time to allow us to remove the electrodes. You may take a shower to wash your hair to remove the creams and paste we used to attach the electrodes. You will have your own bathroom facilities. Fresh towels and wash cloths will be provided. If you need to leave the center at a certain time, please let us know when you arrive in the center. We will need to have at least 6 hours of recording time to ensure an accurate study and meet the requirements of the insurance companies, but we will do our best to accommodate your requests.
What happens after my sleep study?
A large amount of information is collected during your sleep study. A sleep specialist will interpret this information and a formal report with recommendations will be sent to your doctor. On the night of the study, our sleep technologists cannot provide you with any diagnosis information about your testing results. Educational information and sleep hygiene tips will be given to you upon leaving. The technicians will do their best to answer any of your questions.

When will my doctor receive my results?
It usually takes 7-14 business days for your doctor to receive your formal report. Please schedule a follow-up visit with your physician after that time to discuss the findings and recommendations for treatment.

Please note: The Sleep Center provides outpatient testing. Therefore, nursing services and medications are not provided.

Disclaimer: The information was adapted from several sources including the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the National Sleep Foundation. This information is provided as an educational tool and is not intended to provide any medical diagnosis nor intended for patient self-diagnosis.

For questions please call the Upstate University Hospital Sleep Center @ (315) 492-5877.