

Your doctor has prescribed a Sleep Study for you. Here's what you need to know:

What is a Sleep Study?

A Sleep Study, sometimes called a polysomnogram (or PSG), is a test that records specific physical activities while sleeping. The information from this test is then "read" or analyzed by a qualified physician to determine whether or not you have a sleep disorder.

What is a Sleep Disorder?

The most common sleep disorder is called Obstructive Sleep Apnea, or OSA. OSA is when a person stops breathing repeatedly during sleep. Breathing stops because the airway collapses and prevents air from getting into the lungs. When breathing stops, sleep patterns are disrupted, and results in a person feeling very tired or sleepy during the day.

OSA is much more common than people realize. Approximately 4 in 100 middle-aged men and 2 in 100 middle-aged women have OSA, and most cases remain undiagnosed and untreated. OSA is as common as adult asthma, and causes 50,000 premature deaths each year... deaths that are very preventable.

If you leave OSA untreated, you are at increased risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and heart attack, stroke, fatigue-related motor vehicle and work accidents, and a decreased quality of life. That's why it's important that you undergo the Sleep Study as soon as possible.

How should I get ready for the Sleep Study?

Just follow the directions given to you by the Sleep Disorder Institute of Riverside Medical Center regarding meals, medication and other issues, so that they don't interfere with the sleep study results.

You should pack a small bag with your pajamas, toothbrush and any other items you will need the next morning. Some patients bring their own pillow from home for better sleep. Our rooms are comfortable and private. If necessary, a complete bathroom and shower are available so you can dress and go straight to work.

What will be happening during my Sleep Study?

A sleep technician, or polysomnographer, will be in the next room monitoring your sleep throughout the night. He or she will place a number of surface electrodes (or leads) on the parts of your body that the doctor has asked us to measure. These are soft and comfortable, and you'll barely even know they're there. The technician will also put two elastic belts across your chest and abdomen to measure your breathing.

Once the prep is done, you'll have time to relax, watch TV, read a book, or other leisure activity before going to sleep. The technician can adjust your room's temperature to suit your personal preference. It may sound different or uncomfortable, but rest assured that most patients fall asleep with little difficulty.

Once you're asleep, the sensitive equipment will be recording electrical signals generated by your brain and muscles, and send that information through the wires to our testing equipment. These are valuable "clues" to help the doctor see if you have a sleep disorder, and if you do, how severe it is.

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How long does it take?

The testing process takes several hours to complete, because we need to monitor you at the deepest part of your sleep. Your body and brain cycle between NREM (Non-Rapid eye Movement) Sleep and REM (Rapid Eye Movement) Sleep approximately every 90 minutes, and we need to measure your sleep at the REM stage.

What if you find that I have Sleep Apnea during the study?

If we should discover severe sleep apnea, we may apply a CPAP Therapy device during your sleep study. For less severe sleep apnea, you may be asked to come back for a second night of testing with the CPAP mask after discussing your options with your physician or the sleep doctor.

CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) Therapy delivers pressurized air through tubing to a nasal mask or nasal pillows, which are fitted around the head. The pressurized air gently opens the patient's throat and breathing passages, allowing them to breathe normally while asleep.

If you've had difficulty sleeping, most patients see near-immediate results when CPAP Therapy is applied. It's like a miracle machine to help them sleep!

Your trained Riverside polysomnographer will work with you to set the precise level of pressurized air for your exact breathing needs. This important setting is called CPAP titration, and is different for every patient.

What's the most important thing I need to do?

The most important thing is to keep your scheduled appointment! If you must cancel, please let us know 48 hours prior to your testing time. Canceling or failing to arrive for your scheduled appointment prevents us from moving another patient into your scheduled time slot, so please be there. You may call us at any time with questions at (815) 933-2784. We look forward to seeing you!