

## **Announcement: Canadian Thoracic Society releases new Sleep Apnea Guidelines**

February 23, 2011: The Canadian Thoracic Society released new guidelines on sleep disordered breathing, which provide the latest recommendations for sleep apnea diagnosis and treatment. The guidelines are created for health-care professionals by physicians who are experts in sleep disordered breathing. They are designed to keep health-care professionals up to date on the most recent evidence about how to diagnose and manage sleep apnea.

### **What is Sleep Apnea?**

Sleep apnea is a serious breathing disorder that causes sufferers to have dozens or hundreds of breathing pauses or “apneas” per night. These repeated periods of breathing pauses during sleep and the chronic sleep deprivation they cause have both physical and psychological consequences. People with untreated sleep apnea are more likely to have motor vehicle crashes, hypertension, and heart attacks, irregular heart beat stroke, depression, impotence and diabetes.

### **Risk of Sleep Apnea in Canada<sup>1</sup>**

- 26 per cent of Canadian adults aged 18 years and older are estimated to be at high risk for having sleep apnea.
- 1 of every 5 adults has at least mild sleep apnea (20%).
- 1 of every 15 adults has at least moderate sleep apnea (6.6%).
- 2 to 3 per cent of children are likely to have sleep apnea.

### **Testing for Sleep Apnea in Canada**

The Canadian guidelines for the treatment of sleep apnea, developed by the Canadian Thoracic Society, recommend that waiting times should be no more than six months. People in certain occupations, such as truck drivers, bus drivers, airline pilots and taxi drivers, should be tested within four weeks because of the dangerous potential consequences of sleep apnea.

### **Where you can find more information**

#### **For Health Care professionals**

The update provides evidence-based recommendations on the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disordered breathing for physicians and health care teams involved in the care of patients with sleep disordered breathing, and addresses the following topics:

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<sup>1</sup> PHAC. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/sleepapnea-apneesommeil/ff-rr-2009-eng.php>

- wait times
- portable monitoring
- treatment of asymptomatic adult obstructive sleep apnea
- treatment with conventional continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) vs. automatic CPAP
- treatment of central sleep apnea syndrome in heart failure patients
- bariatric surgery \*
- complex sleep apnea \*
- optimum positive airway pressure technologies \*.

*\* new in 2011 Update*

To learn more about the new Diagnosis and Treatment of Sleep Disordered Breathing guidelines visit [www.respiratoryguidelines.ca](http://www.respiratoryguidelines.ca)

### **For patients**

To learn more about sleep apnea visit [our sleep apnea webpage](#) and talk to your doctor about the new guidelines.

### **For policy makers**

The Canadian Thoracic Society recommends that medical assessment and/or sleep monitoring should be arranged and completed within four weeks for patients with suspected severe obstructive sleep apnea with a co-morbid condition or a safety critical occupation. The maximum wait time for all other patients should be six months.

Learn more about the respiratory guidelines visit [www.respiratoryguidelines.ca](http://www.respiratoryguidelines.ca)

### **About The Canadian Lung Association**

Established in 1900, The Canadian Lung Association is one of Canada's oldest and most respected health charities, and the leading national organization for science-based information, research, education, support programs, and advocacy on lung health issues. [www.lung.ca](http://www.lung.ca)

### **About The Canadian Thoracic Society**

The Canadian Thoracic Society is a specialty society and the medical section of the Canadian Lung Association. The CTS promotes lung health by supporting the respiratory community through leadership, collaboration, research, learning and advocacy, and promoting the best respiratory practices in Canada.  
[www.lung.ca/cts](http://www.lung.ca/cts)