

Sleep Apnoea

What Is It?

Sleep apnoea is a sleep disorder characterised by repeated interruptions in breathing during sleep. These pauses in breathing, known as apnoeas, can last for seconds to minutes and lead to disrupted sleep patterns and decreased oxygen levels in the body. There are two main types of sleep apnoea: obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA), where the airway is partially or completely blocked, and central sleep apnoea, which occurs when the brain fails to signal the muscles to breathe.

Why Is It Done?

Sleep apnoea assessment is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Diagnosis:** To confirm the presence and type of sleep apnoea, determine its severity, and identify contributing factors.
2. **Treatment planning:** Guiding the development of appropriate treatment strategies to alleviate symptoms and improve sleep quality.
3. **Health implications:** Addressing sleep apnoea can help reduce the risk of associated health issues, including cardiovascular problems, daytime fatigue, and cognitive impairment.

What It Involves?

Sleep apnoea evaluation typically includes:

1. **Polysomnography (Sleep Study):** A comprehensive overnight test conducted in a sleep centre, involving monitoring of various physiological parameters such as brain activity, heart rate, breathing patterns, and oxygen levels.
2. **Home sleep apnoea test:** In some cases, a simplified version of a sleep study can be done at home using portable monitoring devices.
3. **Sleep questionnaires:** Answering detailed questions about sleep patterns, daytime symptoms, and overall sleep quality.

How To Prepare?

1. **Medical history:** Provide information about your medical history, including any previous sleep issues, medications, and underlying health conditions.
2. **Symptom description:** Note down symptoms such as loud snoring, choking during sleep, and daytime fatigue.
3. **Medications:** Consult with your healthcare provider about any medications that may need to be adjusted before the sleep study.

How Long It Takes?

A full overnight sleep study usually takes one night to complete. The time required for preparation, setup, monitoring, and data analysis varies, and you may be asked to arrive at the sleep centre in the evening.

What Happens After?

1. **Results discussion:** Following the sleep study, a sleep specialist will review the results and discuss the findings with you.
2. **Diagnosis and treatment plan:** Based on the sleep study results and your symptoms, the specialist will provide a diagnosis and recommend suitable treatment options.
3. **Treatment implementation:** If diagnosed with sleep apnoea, treatment options may include continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy, lifestyle modifications, positional therapy, or surgery.
4. **Follow-up:** Regular follow-up appointments may be scheduled to monitor treatment progress and make necessary adjustments.
5. **Health improvement:** Effective sleep apnoea management can lead to improved sleep quality, reduced daytime fatigue, and a lower risk of associated health complications.