

# FAMILY SLEEP DIAGNOSTICS

SAVING LIVES AND MARRIAGES

## WHY SHOULD I HAVE A SLEEP STUDY?

Your physician has referred you to us for an overnight polysomnogram (sleep study). A polysomnogram is used to diagnose numerous sleep disorders. Approximately 70 million people in the United States are affected by a sleep problem. About 40 million Americans suffer from a chronic sleep disorder and an additional 20-30 million are affected by intermittent sleep-related problems. However, an overwhelming majority of sleep disorders remain undiagnosed and untreated (National Commission on Sleep Disorders Research, 1992).

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INADEQUATE SLEEP ?

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- Excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Dozing off while engaged in an activity such as reading, watching TV, sitting in a meeting or waiting in traffic.
- Slowed thinking and reacting.
- Difficulty listening to what is said or understanding directions.
- Difficulty remembering or retaining information.
- Frequent errors or mistakes.
- Narrowing of attention, missing important changes in a situation.
- Poor judgment in complex situations.
- Depression or negative mood.
- Impatience or being quick to anger.
- Frequent blinking, difficulty focusing eyes, or heavy eyelids.

### WHAT IS MY PHYSICIAN LOOKING FOR ?

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- Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is the most common sleep disorder seen in the Sleep Center. Sleep apnea, a breathing disorder characterized by brief interruptions of breathing during sleep, affects as many as 18 million people, according to the National Institute of Health (NIH). Estimates indicate that untreated sleep apnea may cause \$3.4 billion in additional medical costs (SLEEP, 1992). OSA is a serious condition, which can cause an increased risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke or even death, unless treated. Patients with OSA have either a complete or partial obstruction of their airway during sleep causing loud snoring, drops in their blood oxygen levels, choking sensations and frequent arousals (brief awakenings).
- Periodic limb movements (PLMS) during sleep are repetitive leg movements that occur while the patient is asleep. These movements typically occur in the legs but may also be seen in the arms. When severe, these leg movements can significantly disrupt sleep causing excessive daytime sleepiness.
- Restless legs syndrome (RLS) is a movement disorder that keeps the patient from going to sleep. Approximately 12 million Americans have restless legs syndrome, a sleep and movement disorder characterized by unpleasant feelings in the legs (tingling, crawling, creeping and/or pulling), which cause an urge to move in order to relieve the symptoms. Symptoms may be partially relieved by movement, such as walking or stretching.
- There are over 90 documented sleep disorders, though many are rare and may never be seen in most sleep centers.
- Because these disorders occur during sleep, most people are unaware that they even have a problem.

### WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR THESE DISORDERS ?

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- OSA can be treated by sleeping with CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure). CPAP is a machine that helps to keep the airway from collapsing. There are surgical procedures that may help to eliminate OSA in some individuals. In mild cases of OSA, a dental appliance may be effective. Weight loss is recommended for those patients who are over weight or obese.
- RLS and PLMS may be treated with medications.