

The **SOUND SLEEPER**

The quarterly newsletter of the Sleep Apnea Patient Support Group of Central Contra Costa County
~ our 16th year ~

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THE SOUND SLEEPER

The "Sound Sleeper" is the newsletter of the Central Contra Costa County Sleep Apnea Patient Support Group founded in 1994. The name "Sound Sleeper" comes from the euphoric sensation of awaking from a sound night's sleep once Sleep Apnea treatment has commenced. It furnishes information and items of educational interest to those who have Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) and is available by mail or via e-mail (as a Word.doc and as a .pdf). To be placed on the distribution list contact "Amy" at the Contra Costa Sleep Center: contracostasleepcenter@hotmail.com. To offer editorial comment re: the "Sound Sleeper" please contact Dick Griffiths at: r.b.griff@sbcglobal.net

THE SUPPORT GROUP

The Sleep Apnea support group provides to those diagnosed as having Sleep Apnea, a variety of services in the areas of education and patient support so that the full health benefits of their prescribed individual treatment may be achieved through "compliance." The support group is open to all patients and their families in Central Contra Costa County.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

There is no membership fee for participation in the Support Group meetings held in the Ball Auditorium, John Muir Medical Center, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek from 7:00 - 8:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday in January, April, July and October. These meetings are sponsored by: the John Muir Medical Center and the Contra Costa Sleep Center.

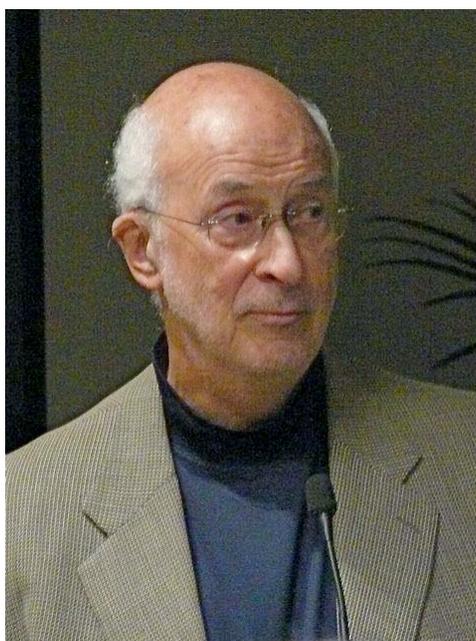
WHAT IS SLEEP APNEA?

Sleep Apnea is a physical disorder that causes some people to frequently cease breathing while sleeping. Sleep Apnea is a very serious health problem if left untreated!

YOU COULD SAVE A LIFE!

Do you know someone who you think may have Sleep Apnea? If so, suggest they contact a Respiratory Physician or the American Sleep Apnea Association at: 1424 K Street, NW, Suite 302, Washington, DC 20005 and they will send a packet of information. You may also call them at (202) 293-3650, FAX at (202) 293-3656, or on the web at: < www.sleepapnea.org > or e-mail at: < asaa@sleepapnea.org >

MEET THE EXPERTS FOR A "Q & A"



Dr. Michael L. Cohen

The Support Group hosted Michael L. Cohen, M.D. and Matt Chirco at the January meeting. Both men are truly experts on Sleep Apnea in their respective fields. Dr. Cohen is Medical Director of the Contra Costa Sleep Center. Matt Chirco is the owner of Oxygen Plus, a local durable medical equipment provider.

Dr. Cohen started off the evening with an introduction of Matt Chirco and a humorous but possibly useful anecdote regarding a women patient who said she had solved the problem of cold air from her CPAP in winter by using an extension cord and placing a nightlight under the air intake of her CPAP machine and then covering both with a towel to take the chill off.

In answer to a question concerning improving CPAP compliance he commented that Provigil (Modafinil) has been used successfully to help people with Sleep Apnea stay awake during the day until they have adapted to CPAP treatment.



Matt Chirco

In answer to a question about support for your CPAP machine while traveling overseas, Matt answered that most CPAP manufacturers can provide you with lists of local distributors and agents in foreign countries about to provide you support.

Answering a question regarding "bloating" caused by CPAP Matt suggested raising or lowering the head position with pillows to change the alignment of the airway to see if that would help.

CPAP pillows permitting side sleeping were also reviewed as a helpful option.

Other questions that arose during the discussion concerned; airport security

NEXT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING - 7PM, THURSDAY, APRIL 16TH

checks of CPAP machines, emergency power for CPAP machines, travel tips and what to do if your mask doesn't fit comfortably (see your equipment provider for aid in adjustment or possibly even a different type of mask).



Here is a picture of the January support group meeting with Dr. Cohen referring a question to Matt Chirco for discussion. **Won't you join us for our next meeting?**

EVEN MILD SLEEP APNEA POSES RISK!

Writing in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine (Nov 2008) two British researchers reported on a study of 64 patients with minimal Sleep Apnea symptoms (less than 4% Oxygen desaturation and no daytime sleepiness) and found significant arterial stiffness and atherosclerosis – a precursor of cardiovascular events. They concluded that repeated arousals from sleep lead to increased sympathetic nerve activity, higher levels of catecholamines (i.e. hormones produced by the adrenal glands, which are released into the blood during times of physical or emotional stress), and hypertension. Therefore patients with only mild Sleep Apnea may benefit from CPAP therapy through the reduction in apneas experienced.



THE PHYSICIAN'S CORNER

by Harry J MacDannald MD

Drowsy Driving Quiz

In the last issue we talked about Drowsy Driving, its symptoms, causes and cures. In review here are some signs that should tell a driver to stop and rest:

- Your eyes close or go out of focus by themselves
- You have trouble keeping your head up
- You can't stop yawning
- You have wandering thoughts and daydreams
- You don't remember driving the past few miles
- You drift between lanes, tailgate, or miss signs
- You have drifted off the road and narrowly missed crashing

There are three main causes of drowsy driving:

1. Sleep restriction
2. Sleep fragmentation
3. Undiagnosed Sleep Disorder

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine offers the following ways to avoid becoming drowsy while driving:

Get enough sleep - adults need seven-to-eight hours of sleep each night in order to maintain good health and optimum performance.

Take breaks while driving --If you become drowsy while driving, pull off to a rest area and take a short nap, preferably 15-20 minutes in length.

Do not drink alcohol --Alcohol can further impair a person's ability to stay awake and make good decisions. Taking the wheel after having just one glass of alcohol can affect your level of fatigue while driving.

Do not drive late at night --Avoid driving after midnight, which is a natural period of sleepiness

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And now for the quiz to test your knowledge of some of the common truths and mis-truths about drowsy driving and sleep apnea.

### COFFEE OVERCOMES THE EFFECTS OF DROWSINESS WHILE DRIVING:

**FALSE** --Caffeine is not a substitute for sleep. It works only in the short run and wears off FAST. You are still subject to sleep deprived "micro-naps" that can last 4-5 seconds. At 65 MPH, that is 1½ times the length of a football field!!!!!!

### I CAN TELL WHEN I'M GOING TO SLEEP:

**FALSE**-- Most people think this is true. It simply is not. If you're drowsy, you know generally when you might fall asleep, but the moment is something completely out of

your control. You also do not know how long you have been asleep, and even a few seconds can end up with fatal results for you or someone else.

### I'M A VERY SAFE DRIVER, SO IT DOESN'T MATTER IF I'M SLEEPY:

**FALSE** --The ONLY safe driver is the alert driver. A driving instructor becomes a menace if they are sleepy behind the wheel. The young man who was awarded "America's Safest Teen Driver" in 1990 later fell asleep behind the wheel and was killed.

### I CAN'T TAKE NAPS:

**FALSE**-- Many people say this. If you think you can't nap, stop the car and recline for 15 minutes anyway. Find a quiet place that is safe..... the corner of a mall or a gas station. Lock your doors, and roll up your windows. I even carry a sleep mask in the car. People look at me funny, but hey..... Like I REALLY care what THEY think!

### I GET PLENTY OF SLEEP:

**FALSE** --Ask yourself this..... do you wake up RESTED? I know precious few people who can answer that "YES". The average person needs 7-8 hours of sleep a night. If you don't get it, you are building up a "sleep debt" which is cumulative.

### BEING SLEEPY MAKES YOU MISPERCEIVE THINGS:

**THIS ONE IS TRUE** --Have you ever driven at night and thought you'd seen an animal but it turned out to be something else (like your wife or husband)? A drowsy driver does not process information as fast or accurately as an alert driver and is unable to react quickly enough to avoid a collision. By the way.... if you DO see a real animal, hitting one of THEM is like hitting a brick wall..... can be fatal to both of you.

### YOUNG PEOPLE NEED LESS SLEEP:

**FALSE** --In fact, teens and young adults need MORE sleep than people in their 30's. This is due to increased activity and output which need more regeneration time.

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE MEETING NOTICES & THE SOUND SLEEPER BY E-MAIL?

CONTACT AMY @

contracostasleepcenter@hotmail.com

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