

Obstructive sleep apnea is a common problem during sleep where there is physical obstruction of the upper airway. Usual complaints include excessive daytime drowsiness, loud snoring and observed abnormal breathing during sleep. Obstructive sleep apnea happens when the tongue and soft palate in the back of the mouth relax and collapse, causing the throat to close off. Some people complain of waking up frequently during the night, tossing and turning, using the bathroom multiple times during the night, waking up with headaches, and waking up gasping or with a racing heartbeat.

Untreated, sleep apnea can be linked to serious health problems including heart attack, stroke, car accident, high blood pressure and overall poor quality of life due to excessive drowsiness. Poor sleep due to sleep apnea can also cause depression, irritability and affect job productivity.

To find out if you have sleep apnea, a sleep study is recommended. The sleep study involves staying overnight in a sleep lab where breathing, heart rate, oxygen levels, brain waves and limb movements are recorded.

The treatment for sleep apnea is continuous positive airway pressure or CPAP. This is a mask that transmits pressure to the back of the throat to keep it open all night so breathing is normal. The person sleeps deeper, no longer snores and feels more rested during the day.

STOP BANG Questionnaire

Snoring: Do you snore louder than talking or loud enough to be heard through closed doors?	Yes	No
Tired: Do you often feel tired, fatigued or sleepy during daytime?	Yes	No
Observed: Has anyone observed you stop breathing during your sleep?	Yes	No
Blood pressure: Do you have or are you being treated for high blood pressure?	Yes	No
BMI: Is your BMI more than 35 kg/m ² ?	Yes	No
Age: Are you over 50 years old?	Yes	No
Neck circumference: Greater than 17 inches (male) or 16 inches (female)? Measured around Adam's apple.	Yes	No
Gender: Are you male?	Yes	No

Risk for obstructive sleep apnea:

Low risk: 0-2

Intermediate risk: 3-4

High risk: 5 or greater

Total # of "Yes" responses: _____

To be evaluated for sleep apnea and discuss sleep testing, ask your primary care physician or call the Logan Health Heart & Lung clinic 406 257-8992 to schedule an appointment.