



Sleep Disorders

FAQ: What is a Sleep Study?

What is a sleep disorder?

A sleep disorder is any problem that affects your ability to sleep at night. Sleeping disorders can keep you from falling asleep or from sleeping soundly through the night. This disruption in sleep can cause difficulties staying awake and functioning during the day.

What causes sleep disorders?

Sleep disorders arise from physical as well as emotional causes. Patients most at risk for problems with sleep are menopausal women, elderly, and those with medical conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and obesity

What are some types of sleeping disorders?

The most common type of sleep disorder is insomnia: the difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, waking too early or waking feeling unrefreshed.

- *Sleep apnea* is a condition in which people stop breathing during sleep. The most common form of sleep apnea is obstructive, where the upper airway closes off and prevents the person from getting enough oxygen during the night. Typically sleep apnea is associated with loud snoring.
- Some people suffer from *movement disorders*. It is very common for people to have difficulty staying asleep because of involuntary movements, often from the legs, that occur during sleep. This can often be associated with a medical condition called restless leg syndrome. The repetitive movement can disturb the continuity of sleep and leave a person feeling tired and unrefreshed.
- *Narcolepsy*, while rare, is not uncommon. This neurologic condition affects a person's ability to remain awake during the daytime. Patients with narcolepsy will often fall asleep without warning, sometimes in dangerous situations such as driving. Although there is no cure for narcolepsy, proper evaluation can lead to specific treatments that can remarkably improve a patient's life.
- Often times, people suffer from *sleep schedule disturbances*. People who work night shifts or who have irregular work hours may experience difficulty with sleep as a result of changes in their sleep-wake routine. This can cause problems staying asleep or remaining awake during the day.

Meeting with a sleep specialist can help identify what type of testing, if any, is most appropriate for the eventual diagnosis and management of a sleep disorder.

What is a sleep study?

A sleep study (polysomnogram) is a recording of brain waves, heart activity, certain muscle movements, blood oxygen concentrations, and breathing patterns while you sleep. This test is pain-free.

Why is this test necessary?

This test enables the physician to determine if you are getting a quality night's sleep, if you are getting enough oxygen throughout the night, and most especially whether or not you have any abnormal breathing patterns while sleeping, such as stopping breathing momentarily.

What will happen during the test?

During the test you will be connected to several different types of measuring devices. Some electrodes will be attached to your scalp to measure the brain waves, a clip will be placed on your finger to measure blood oxygen levels, and a couple bands will be placed around your chest and abdomen. You will be asked just to go to sleep. We will do the rest.

What should I expect when I come to the sleep lab?

The sleep lab is a unique setting in which an examination can be performed while they are sleeping. Skilled technicians will attach sensors (non-invasive) to measure brain wave activity, muscle activity, heart rate, respiratory effort, oxygen saturation and body position. Patients are continuously monitored through the night in order to quantify the various aspects of their sleep.

The sleep lab provides comfortable amenities to match your home setting as closely as possible. While the sleep lab is located in the hospital, there is nothing clinical about it. You can enjoy a relaxing evening as though you were staying in a hotel for the night. Showers are available in each room and patients can even be at work the very next morning. Your sleep lab results will be communicated promptly to the referring physician.

Does anything else happen during my study?

If during the test we find enough irregular breathing patterns, we may start CPAP therapy. CPAP therapy is the most common method of treating Sleep Apnea. Sometimes we are unable to do this therapy because it is too late in the night and we don't have enough time to complete it before morning. If this is the case, you may be asked to return for a second night.

What things will I need to bring with me?

You should bring your own comfortable sleeping attire. Many patients prefer to bring their own pillows as well. Bring a toothbrush and shampoo if you desire these items. Each room is equipped with a bathroom and shower. Any prescription medications that you normally take should be taken before coming to the Sleep Disorders Center.

What do I need to do to get ready for this test?

You should try to get a normal amount of sleep the day before the study. Please do not take any naps the day of the study. There are only two things you need to do before the test:

- Please wash your hair and do not put any type of conditioner, hair spray or oils in your hair or on your scalp
- Please do not take any caffeine products (coffee, tea, chocolate, etc.) or alcohol for at least seven hours before your study.

When can I go home?

Most patients are finished with their study no later than 7:00 a.m.

What treatments and services are available at the sleep lab?

- Medications
- Alternative sleeping methods
- Recommended lifestyle changes
- Positive pressure airway therapy
- Surgery
- Oral appliances

How will I find out the results of this study?

We will send the results to your physician. You will need to schedule a follow-up appointment in two weeks with your physician to review the results.

How can I arrange to get this study done?

This procedure requires a physician's order. Please ask your physician if this study would help you.

Do you take my insurance?

Once this test is ordered, your insurance company will be contacted by the Admitting Department. They will contact you about your coverage and any required co-payment.

