Sleep Apnea 101: An Overview

If you are someone that snores a lot, wakes up to take in a big breath, or has fatigue, you might be exhibiting signs of sleep apnea. Sleep apnea is a disorder that many people experience where you either have short pauses in your breathing during sleep, or you have shallow breaths. It is common, but also something you need to take seriously. Here is more information about this sleep disorder.

**Types of Sleep Apnea**

The first thing you should know is that there are two main types of sleep apnea, including central sleep apnea and obstructive sleep apnea. Most people with this sleep disorder will have obstructive sleep apnea. This is much more common and creates a blockage in the airway while sleeping. It occurs when the tissue in the back throat temporarily collapses during sleep. The other type is central sleep apnea, which is from the brain not signaling you to breathe during sleep. This can sometimes be more dangerous.

**Symptoms to be Aware of**

The primary symptom of sleep apnea is waking up gasping for air or realizing you were not breathing while sleeping. This usually startles you awake where you need to take in a large gasp of air. Aside from that, you should look for symptoms like always being tired, having irregular heartbeats, snoring, or having depression. Frequent headaches throughout the day can also be a sign of experiencing sleep apnea.

**Risk Factors for Sleep Apnea**

While anyone can develop sleep apnea, there are some people that tend to be at a higher risk. One of the big risk factors is being overweight, so if you have trouble sleeping or snoring and are not at a healthy weight, now might be a good time to remedy that. You are also at a higher risk if you are over the age of 40, a male, or have an especially large neck size. Large tonsils, GERD, and a family history of sleep apnea can also be risk factors.

**What You Can do About it**

Luckily, there are several treatment options available for sleep apnea. You can wear a breathing or oral device while you sleep, lose weight, try natural remedies, and even get surgery. The treatment you get will depend on the severity of your sleep apnea and what remedies you have tried in the past. It is essential that you see a doctor instead of just trying to self-treat your sleep apnea.