



# PMCare Capsule

*We Manage Because We Care*

THE QUARTERLY CAPSULE

FOR INTERNAL CIRCULATION ONLY

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- **Zzzzsleep.....**
- **Identifying the Problem**
- **Berapa Lama Perlu Anak Saya Tidur?**
- **Restful Sleep with Therapy and Self Help**
- **Understanding Snoring**
- **Clinical Update In Primary Care and PMCare GP Award**

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**PMCare**

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Dr Venkateswara Rao receiving the PMCare GP of the Year 2010 award from Encik Wan Shukri Ariffin.

# Zzzzleep...



It is estimated that we sleep away about 25 years of our life, which is about 1/3 of our life span. This inevitable component of our life means a lot of things to lot of people. For some of us sleep is addictive, we love it, we can't wait to go to bed and we are inspired by it. Others may regard it as losing precious time especially for those who have lot to complete in a day. Then there are still many of us who dread it as we anticipate another sleepless night.

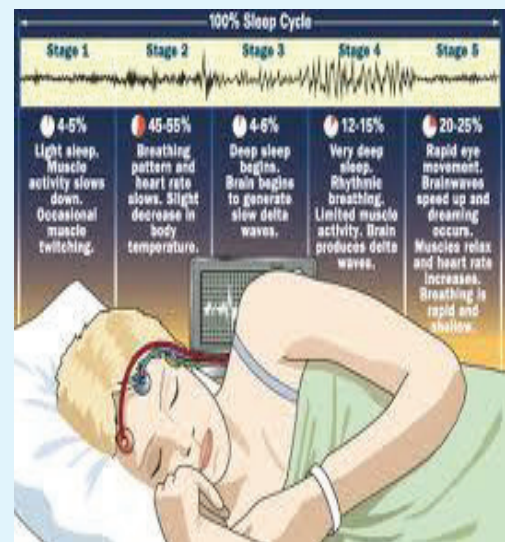
Although nobody is absolutely sure why we sleep and what sleeping does for us, it is generally accepted that it benefits health and the lack of it makes us function badly and reduces our immunity to infections and illnesses. Poor quality of sleep can cause accidents, stress, nervousness, irritability, sadness and anger and also makes us look considerably older.

During sleep, growth hormones are produced and repair, restoration and growth takes place. Growth hormones serve an important role in childhood development. All the cells are renewed faster during sleep than while we are awake. During the dreaming stage of sleep we are able to clear out mind clutters and deal with repressed emotions so they do not build as negative emotions that eventually manifest in our physical body as ill health or lack of well being.

## Understanding Your Sleep Pattern

In a normal sleep cycle we have periods of light sleep, deep sleep, when it is difficult to wake up and dreaming sleep. When we are awake our brain is constantly reacting to stimuli. During sleep, there is loss of reaction to outside factor and partial loss of mental function although the basic bodily functions such as breathing continue.

There are two states of sleep, the Non Rapid Eye Movement State (NREM) and the Rapid Eye Movement State (REM). The NREM sleep is further divided into 4 stages which ranges from light sleep, first stage of true sleep, state of deep sleep and finally the deepest level of sleep at which state the body carries our repair and restoration.



Some dreaming occurs at all stages of sleep, but mostly in the REM sleep. REM is different from other four stages as there is high level of brain activity but total body relaxation, with muscles virtually in state of paralysis, which in turn allows the mind to explore the subconscious mind without us acting our dream event. In a normal night sleep NREM is interrupted by REM about four to five times. Each sleep cycle is about 90 minutes. Throughout this cycle we have wakefulness, drowsiness and REM sleep. To a young, fit, unstressed individual these wakefulness will go unnoticed. With age and lack of well being, we tend to be more aware of these periods.

## How Much Sleep do You Need?

Many require about 8 hours a night but some might need more while others may do well with less. The truth is in the quality of sleep that matters rather than quantity (hours). Probably what is more damaging to our health is our obsession with the amount of sleep we need!

We should start by understanding that individual need differs and that throughout our lives our sleep needs are constantly changing. Understanding this can lessen our stress over our sleeping habits. Generally speaking, the amount of sleep one needs at different stages of life depends on:

- Aging slows down the body processes reducing the need for long sleep period. Practicing deep relaxation also result in need for less sleep. Emotional and mental stress will make an individual sleep more. Exercise promotes healthy sleep though exercising late in the evening might inhibit sleep.
- Losing a few hours of sleep through a late night or temporary disturbances will not damage health as we make up this for short fall the next night. However regular lack of sleep will affect our daily functioning.

Too much sleep (hypersomnia) is as unhealthy as too little as this too upsets the body's natural cycle. It can also cause tiredness, lethargy and irritability and can be a symptom of underlying depression.

## Identifying the Problems

Sleep inhibitors can be divided into 4 categories, which are the environmental factor, lifestyle, physical causes and psychological reasons.

### Environmental factors

- Noise

Occasional loud noises are more disruptive than the regular humming, ticking and buzzing noises. After being woken up by the load noise, it could be the anger at having your sleep disturbed that keeps you awake more than the noise itself. A common source of noise is the snoring of your bed partner. Ear plugs are useful low pitch regular noise. Double glazing the window can eliminate traffic noise. Another useful way would be to introduce 'white noise' which is a gentle humming sound which can mask the unwanted noise.

- Temperature

Too cold or too hot can prevent you from having a good night sleep. A temperature of 18C is ideal for sleep. If the temperature is not right the brain will respond by making you move around and then wake up. The bedroom should also be well ventilated. Ionizers can be used to prevent a stuffy atmosphere.



- Light

Using heavy lined curtains can prevent light from a full moon night or more commonly street light from entering the bed room.

- Bedding

Bed and Pillows are most important as we spend one third of our life in them.

Use cotton sheets as synthetics can cause uncomfortable warmth and aggravate skin problems as it doesn't allow your skin to breathe through it properly. Vacuum the mattress to eliminate germs and dust mites. The mattress should be firm to provide the proper support to your spine, allowing its natural S shape when lying on your back. Pillow should be of the right thickness to support your neck in a straight line with your spine. Bed should be the right size to avoid cramping.

### Lifestyle

- Diet

Having a late heavy meal, particularly with plenty of animal fat can create indigestion which can lead to sleeping difficulties. Keep the last meal of the light with plenty of vegetables and salad. Being hungry can wake you up through restlessness. Low sugar at night can cause night sweats. So light snack before retiring will help. It is a good idea to note which food affects your sleep as a particular food can cause sedative effect to one person while act as a stimulant to another.

- Caffeine

Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, coca cola and chocolates. It stimulates adrenaline production, keeping your mind and body in the state of wakefulness and anxiety. Caffeine should not be taken within 4 hours of bedtime, even better if the last dose was before midday.

- Alcohol

An occasional drink at night helps you relax but too much alcohol will become a stimulant. Though it may initially make you feel sleepy the effect wears off causing early morning waking.

- Smoking

Nicotine in the cigarette stimulates nervous system and raises blood pressure. Smokers tend to have light and more disturbed sleep than non smokers.

- Exercise

Regular day time exercise promotes good sleep. Do not exercise late at night as this pumps adrenaline into the bloodstream that will inhibit sleep.

- Work hours

Stop working at least 2 hours before bed time to allow your mind to switch off. Allow the last 15 minutes of work to make list of the outstanding actions, clear the computer and tidy the desk and go through a winding down process. Do not bring work into your bedroom. Keep your bedroom as a sanctuary for relaxation and sleep.

## Physical Causes

- Restless Legs

This is described as compulsive moving of the legs while lying down which can be disturbing for both the partners.

Many naturopaths consider that the most common cause is iron deficiency and recommend foods rich in iron.

- Cramps

With cramps the sufferers wake up in pain. Most cramps have no particular cause and self help is recommended.

Boosting your diet with potassium and Vitamin E can help overcome this problem. Calming and relaxing the body by massaging with lavender essential oil can be helpful. However if this problem persists a visit to the doctor is recommended.

- Hormonal Fluctuations

Menstruation can affect sleep. Painful periods can also disturb sleep. Menopause is well known to affect sleep through hot flashes, night sweats and panic attacks. This can be distressing but learning more about menopause can help you understand these changes better. An over or under active thyroid can affect sleep as well. Treatment by an endocrinologist is necessary.

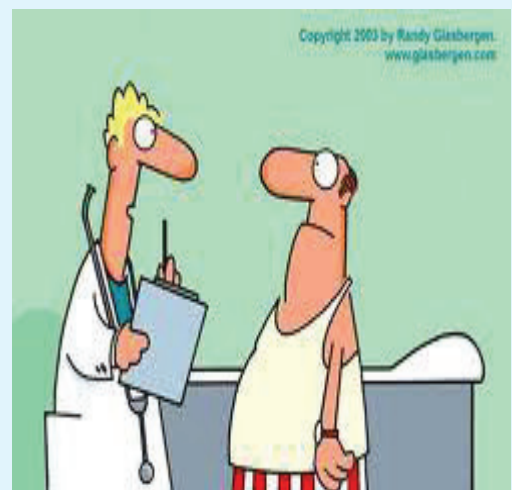
- Tinnitus

This is an irritating condition in which the sufferer hears sound in the ear even when there is no external sound.

The type and the loudness of the sound vary from person to person. Some people may not hear any inner sound in the daytime but at night the sound can prevent sleep.

- Effects of Drugs

All drugs have side effects and many of these include sleep disturbance. If you are experiencing sleep problems since starting a medication, this should be discussed with the doctor before stopping the medication without the doctor's advice. Although people fall asleep within an hour of taking sleeping pills, the sleep is not like normal sleep. Brain function is depressed hence interfering with the normal brain activity during sleep. During usage, many people may experience unpleasant side effects such as daytime grogginess, fuzziness, labored movement, tiredness, all of which can produce added stress and depression. Some drugs can cause severe withdrawal symptoms, hence making it addictive and eventually needing higher dosage to get the same effect.



**"What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?"**

## Psychological Reasons

- Stress

Stress plays a big part in many of our lives. When a person is suffering from stress, the body reacts in 'fight or flight mode', producing adrenaline to spur us into action. This causes rise in blood pressure and breathing rate, dilatation of the pupil and muscle contractions. These changes in our body inhibit sleep. Stress can make us get up in the middle of the night and mentally churn over problems and stop us from getting back to sleep.

Early morning, such as 3 am or 4 am is the worse time of wakefulness when everything seems worse than it really is. This is because our metabolism is the slowest at this hour with blood sugar level the lowest. Understanding this can go a long way in calming yourself as you will know that even though the problems are not solved, they will not seem quite so bad when the morning comes when the metabolism has sprung into action.



- Depression

Depression is a feeling with persistent sadness, usually accompanied by lack of hope and feeling of helplessness. Depression disrupts the body clock so people have early morning waking and inability to get back to sleep but a need to sleep during the day.



- Sleep walking and sleep talking

These two conditions can be caused by stress situations, irregular sleep schedule such as shift work, over consumption of alcohol, sleep apnea and certain conditions such as migraine and epilepsy. Adults who sleep walk should develop regular sleeping hours, avoid getting over tired, wind down physically and mentally two hours before bedtime. For deep rooted emotional problems, counseling may help.



- Nightmares

Nightmares are linked with repressed emotions such as grief guilt or fear and anxiety and stress. We need to be aware that the nightmare itself is just a way of bringing our issues into our awareness to be dealt with. Think about it and what message it is trying to give you.

## BERAPA LAMA PERLU ANAK SAYA TIDUR?



Berapa lama kanak-kanak perlu tidur bergantung kepada pelbagai faktor terutama umur kanak-kanak tersebut. Keperluan tidur di bawah hanyalah sekadar panduan:

**Usia 1 – 4 minggu:** 15 – 18 jam sehari

Anak baru lahir lazimnya tidur sejumlah 15 ke 18 jam sehari dengan setiap kali tidur mengambil masa lebih kurang 2 hingga 4 jam. Anak yang lahir sebelum matang kerap tidur lebih lama untuk mengejar pertumbuhan badan.

Anak-anak baru lahir tidak tertakluk kepada kitaran siang dan malam. Ini adalah kerana mereka belum lagi ditabdir oleh jam dalaman biologies (atau ritma circadian) malah kerap tanpa sebarang pola khusus.

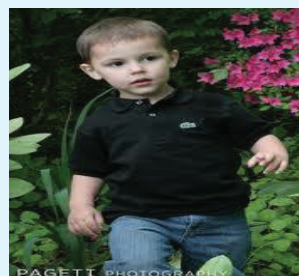
**Usia 1 – 4 bulan:** 14 – 15 jam sehari

Amnya setelah mencapai usia 6 minggu anak-anak mula dipengaruhi keadaan sekitar dan mula membentuk pola aktiviti terutama dari segi tidur dan makan (menyusu). Ramai yang mula tidur dalam jangkamasa yang lebih lama (dari 4 – 6 jam). Mereka kerap mula membiasakan tidur panjang ini di malam hari.

**Usia 4 – 12 bulan:** 14 – 15 jam sehari

Dijangkakan tidur sepanjang 15 jam sehari lebih merihatkan tetapi kerap kelekaan bermain atau berinteraksi dengan sekitar akan meningkatkan waktu jaga. Mereka yang berusia 11 bulan umpamanya kerap tidur sekadar 12 jam sahaja. Ini adalah masa yang perlu diterapkan gaya hidup sihat yang melibatkan tidur kerana mereka mula bersosial dan dipengaruhi oleh orang-orang di sekeliling sehingga pola tidur mereka boleh menghampiri pola dewasa.

Bayi kerap terbiasa melalui jangkamasa tidur sekejap (naps) dan kekerapan ini menurun ke hanya dua kali pada umur 6 bulan. Ini membolehkan mereka tidur lebih lama di waktu malam semakin usia mereka meningkat bersama dengan ketertiban jam dalaman mereka. Agak lazim mereka melalui 'nap' ini pada lebih kurang jam 9 pagi (selama sejam); pada lebih kurang jam 12 tengahari ke 2 petang (selama sejam atau lebih) dan sekali lagi lebih kurang jam 4 ke 5 petang (selama sejam lebih). Pola ini mungkin berbeza dari individu ke individu dan wajar dimanfaatkan oleh ibu atau penjaga untuk mengatur kerja-kerja rumah.





**Usia 1 -3 tahun:** 12 – 14 jam sehari

Bila anak-anak menjangkau usia 1 tahun, peningkatan kebolehan beraktif dan berinteraksi akan mengurangkan keperluan 'nap' sehingga ramai yang akan tidur sekejap ini 1 – 2 kali sahaja sehari apabila mencapai usia 18 – 21 bulan sehingga ramai yang tidak lagi tidur pagi. Kajian menunjukkan ramai anak-anak yang berumur 2 – 3 tahun hanya mendapat 10 jam tidur sahaja sedangkan mereka sebaiknya mendapat 14 jam. Ini melahirkan kebimbangan bahawa kekurangan tidur akan membantut perkembangan mereka. Walaubagaimanapun kebimbangan ini belum dapat dibuktikan kewajarannya.

Kebanyakan anak-anak berusia 21 – 36 bulan memerlukan tidur petang (nap) selama 1 ke 3 jam. Sewajarnya mereka tidur jam 8 ke 9 malam dan bangun di antara jam 6 ke 9 pagi.

**Usia 3 – 6 tahun:** 10 – 12 jam sehari

Diusia ini mereka kerap tidur jam 8 ke 9 malam dan bangun di antara jam 6 dan 9 pagi. Pada amnya ramai yang masih memerlukan tidur petang tetapi jangkamasa tidur akan bertambah kurang dengan pertambahan usia. Malah ramai juga yang tidak lagi tidur petang bila sampai umur 5 tahun.

**Usia 7 – 12 tahun:** 10 – 11 jam sehari

Pada usia ini aktiviti sosial, sekolah dan keluarga amat mempengaruhi tidur sehingga kerap mereka tidur lebih lewat dari sebelumnya. Pengaruh media seperti TV dan komputer (internet juga permainan komputer) makin menyerlah sehingga ramai yang tidur seakan dewasa sedangkan sewajarnya mereka tidur lebih awal contohnya pada jam 9 malam. Mereka sewajarnya mendapat tidur selama 9 ke 12 jam mengikut ketinggian aktiviti harian sebelumnya tetapi kerap mereka mendapat 9 jam sahaja.

**Usia 12 – 18 tahun:** 8 – 9 jam sehari

Usia remaja adalah peringkat usia yang amat berkecamuk. Ini melibatkan pelbagai tekanan hasil dari perkembangan hormon dan tumbesaran badan serta perubahan keperluan sosial yang ketara. Keperluan tidur adalah amat penting di peringkat ini tetapi sering diabaikan bukan sahaja oleh para remaja tetapi juga ibu-bapa. Ada kajian yang membayangkan mereka mungkin memerlukan lebih (lama) tidur dari usia sebelumnya. Jadi bila ternampak mereka tertidur di kelas atau di majlis-majlis tertentu, usah cepat meradang. Ketahuilah punca sebenar supaya mereka boleh dibimbing pada usia genting ini.



## *Restful Sleep with Therapy and Self Help*

### Acupuncture/Acupressure

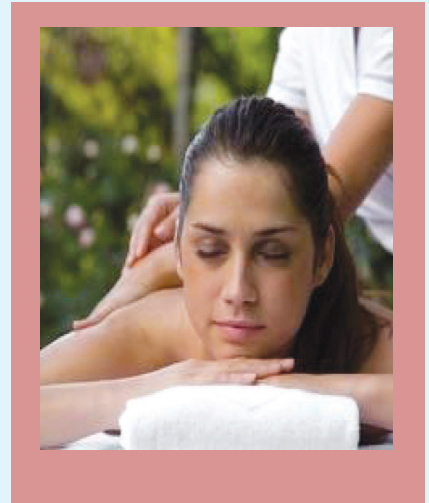
In traditional Chinese medicine, it is believed that our body organs are governed by two forces of energy which is the yin and yang. Insomnia is believed to be caused by the imbalance in these energies. The therapist aimed to unblock the stuck energy and create a balance. To do this he will insert needles along specific meridian which will unblock and redirect the flow of energy. The basis of acupressure is the same, but instead of the needle, the points the meridian pathway is pressed by the fingers of the therapist.

### Reflexology

Reflexology is a soothing deep massage and stimulation of reflex points on the feet aiming to correct the disorders with the body and to stimulate body's own healing potential.

### Massage

Massage is a well known way of relaxing the body and mind, thus promote restful sleep. In conjunction with aromatherapy it can be of great benefit. If you have no one to give you a massage, you can massage parts of your body yourself while sitting, reading or watching television or in bed before sleeping.

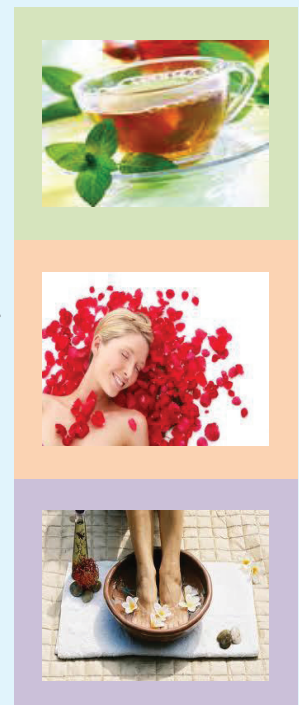


### Herbal remedies

Taking herbal remedy is an ancient practice still used throughout many cultures with each culture developing its own method of herbal medications. Herbs are not addictive unlike sleeping pill and tranquilizers and most suited to people who are prepared to take the remedies regularly without expecting instant results. Most popular herbs that assist peaceful sleep are valerian, chamomile and hop. Passion flower and lemon balm also enhances sleep. St John's Wart relieves depression and insomnia.

### Ways of using these herbs

- As herbal tea  
Use fresh or dried plants or flowers and soak in hot water. Cover and leave to infuse for 10 – 15 minutes. If buying herbal tea off the counter, choose caffeine free herbal preparations.
- As herb pillow  
Dried herbs with sedative properties can be used in a small pillow or cushion. Your herb pillow will release its aromas throughout the night if you place it next to your normal pillow. Suitable herbs are lavender, marjoram, hops, chamomile and rose petal among others.
- As a bath  
Herbal bath is a good way to soothe, relax and assist sleep. The hot water enhances the sedative properties of the herb, the inhaled aroma passes through the nervous system to the brain and the properties absorbed through the skin pass into the bloodstream.



## Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is the ancient art of healing through the use of plant oil which has therapeutic properties to aid the healing process, relax the mind and restore equilibrium to the body. Essential oils are strongly scented droplets which are found in small quantity in the flower, leaves, stems and root of aromatic plants. Essential oils can be used in massage, or via inhalations, in a bath or in a vaporiser in cars among many other methods.

## Physical Exercises

People who have sedentary or physically slow activity indoor jobs may suffer from lack of physical activity. They might be mentally tired at the end of the day, but the mind is unstable to switch off the conscious thinking process. Sleep is a natural reaction to physical tiredness.

Exercise stimulates the body to produce endorphin which relieve pain, uplift mood and create a feeling of well being, while exercising, the mind is also distracted from usual thought, emotions and feelings. It also increases the amount of deep sleep in the night during which the highest level of growth hormone is produced which is important for the repair and rejuvenation of the cells in the body.

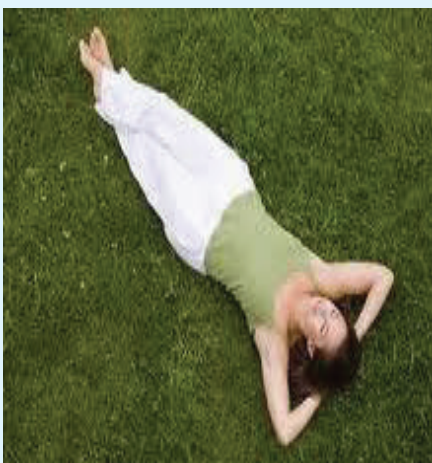
Best times for exercising are morning, late afternoon and early evening. Strenuous exercise should be avoided late at night and certainly not within two hours of bedtime. Gentle stretching is good before bedtime.

## Mental Exercise

Lack of mental activity during the day, lack of personal fulfillment, apathy, lack of drive, motivation and inspiration can also contribute to unrefreshing sleep. To exercise the mind during the day, try reading a book, do a crossword or other mental puzzles, visit the library, join a discussion group, find an absorbing hobby or take an interest in something outside your normal routine. Too much watching television influences a passive mind which does not contribute anything.

## Relaxation Exercise

Relaxation techniques aimed at reducing inner turmoil and stress will in turn help to relieve insomnia. These can be done by yourself or as a member of a relaxation class. There are also a lot of self-help aids available for purchase, such as audio tapes, video tapes and books to guide you through the relaxation process.



### *Simple relaxation technique*

Lie on a supportive mat on the floor, close your eyes and breathe slowly. Relax your arms on the floor, away from your body with palms of your hands facing upwards. Relax your legs and let them fall apart slightly.

Work your way through your body from feet to head, tensing each group of muscles in turn, holding the tension for a moment then relaxing them. As you relax the muscles, breathe out. When you have finished this process, think of a peaceful, relaxing setting, such as lying on a field full of flowers under a warm sun. Keep feeling relaxed, continue to breathe deeply and slowly and stay like this for up to ten minutes.

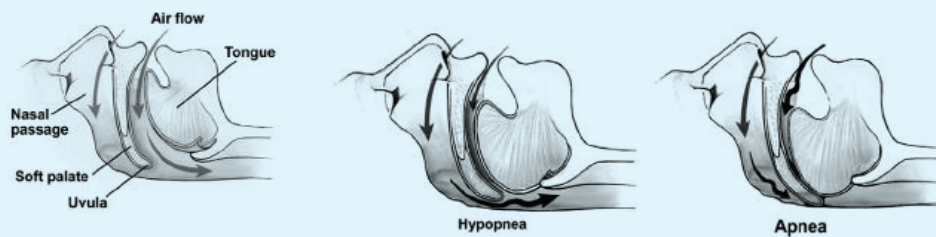
## UNDERSTANDING SNORING

Snoring is basically the sound produced by the vibration of respiratory structures, due to obstructed air movement during breathing while sleeping. Snoring can be soft, but in other cases, it can be loud and can be a significant disturbance to the person in the vicinity. Snoring during sleep may be a sign, or first alarm, of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

### Causes

Generally speaking, the structures involved are uvula and soft palate. The irregular airflow is caused by a passageway blockage and usually due to one of the following:

- Throat weakness, causing the throat to close during sleep.
- Mispositioned jaw, often caused by tension in the muscles.
- Fat gathering in and around the throat.
- Obstruction sleep apnea.
- The tissues at the top of airways touching each other causing vibrations.
- Relaxants such as alcohol or drugs relaxing throat muscles.
- Sleeping on one's back which may result in the tongue dropping to the back of the mouth.
- Enlarged tonsils.



Diagrammatic representation of the main structures (1) in normal situation; (2) when snoring occurs; (3) when breathing stops as in or apnea.

### Obstructive Sleep Apnea

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) or obstructive sleep apnea syndrome is the most common type of sleep apnea and is caused by obstruction of the upper airway. It is characterized by repetitive pauses in breathing (apnea = cessation of breathing) during sleep, despite the effort to breathe, and is usually associated with a reduction in blood oxygen saturation. These pauses in breathing typically last 20 to 40 seconds.

The individual with OSA is rarely aware of having difficulty breathing, even upon awakening. It is recognized as a problem by others witnessing the individual during episodes or is suspected because of its effects on the body. OSA is commonly accompanied with typical cyclical snoring that grows louder as the sleep deepens until it stops at the point of apnea followed by variable choking. OSA denies the individual from restful sleep and he/she usually presents with daytime drowsiness and fatigue associated with significant levels of sleep disturbance or its consequences. The symptoms may be present for years, even decades without identification.

### Treatment

Almost all treatments for snoring revolve around clearing the blockage in the breathing passage. Snorers are advised to lose weight (to stop fat from pressing on the throat), stop smoking (smoking weakens and clogs the throat) and sleep on their side (to prevent the tongue from blocking the throat). A number of other treatment options are also available, ranging from over the counter aids such as nasal sprays, nasal strips or nose clips, lubricating sprays, and "anti-snore" clothing and pillows.

However, snoring is a recognized medical problem and people who snore should always seek professional medical advice before relying on techniques that may mask symptoms (i.e. snoring) but not treat the underlying condition.

A non-invasive approach to OSA is by the use of (CPAP), or continuous positive airway pressure, in which a computer controlled air flow generator, generates an airstream at a constant pressure. This pressure is prescribed by the patient's physician, based on an overnight test or titration. Newer CPAP models are available which slightly reduce pressure upon exhalation to increase patient comfort and compliance. CPAP is the most common treatment for obstructive sleep apnea.

The assessment of OSA via "Sleep Study" as well the treatment is however not covered by our local insurance program.

### Effects of Sleep deprivation

- Irritability
- Cognitive impairment
- Memory lapses or loss
- Impaired moral judgement
- Severe yawning
- Hallucinations
- Symptoms similar to ADHD
- Impaired immune system
- Risk of diabetes Type 2
- Increased heart rate variability
- Risk of heart disease
- Decreased reaction time and accuracy
- Tremors
- Aches

**Other:**

- Growth suppression
- Risk of obesity
- Decreased temperature

## PMCare Sdn Bhd

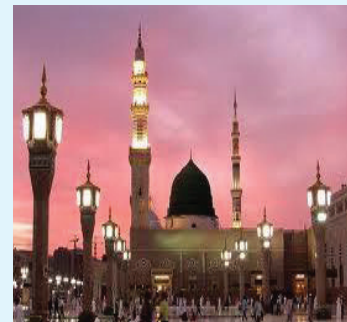
wish all our members

سَلَامَتِ هَآرِي رَايِ عِيْدِ الْفِطْرِ

SELAMAT HARI RAYA AIDILFITRI

&

MAAF ZAHIR BATIN



## CLINICAL UPDATES IN PRIMARY CARE AND PMCARE GP AWARD

PMCare and Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur jointly organized a symposium entitled "Clinical Updates in Primary Care" and PMCare GP of the Year 2010 Award Presentation on Saturday, 23 July 2011 at Renaissance Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

PMCare and Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur believe in smart partnership with the providers and endorse the concept that hospitals should work alongside GPs in offering quality and affordable healthcare to our Members. We believe in lifelong education or continuous professional development of doctors associated with it. Through the years, PMCare have organized talks and other activities contributing towards this end. We believe that doctors must continually raise their awareness as well as knowledge; and with that refine their conduct to fulfill the noble purpose of their being. Taking time away from their clinics for regular updates is time well spent towards this continuous effort and earned CPD points.

We thank the specialists from Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur for the knowledge that they shared with our GP doctors and the latter for not only being so attentive but also raising so many interesting questions. The topics chosen for the day reflected the need of our society. The event was started by Dr Aarthi Maria, Resident Medical Officer (A&E Unit) who gave presentation on "Emergencies & GP – Shortening the Window of Morbidity". The talk was followed by Dr Chong Wei Peng, Consultant Cardiologist, when he covered on the silent disease of high cholesterol with emphasis on triglycerides under the subject of "Hypertriglyceridaemia – What Do You Do?".



The Clinical Updates continued after lunch with Dr Tunku Nor Taayah Tunku Zubir, Rehabilitation Medicine Physician who gave presentation on "Independence Following Multiple Trauma" on caring for those disabled by trauma. Finally and appropriately so, care of the aged. Dr Soraya Kunanayagam, Consultant Geriatrician talked on "Maintaining Health in the Elderly". She emphasized the need for doctors to act fast and safe as well as to plan ahead for the sake of those entrusted to be under their care.

At the event, there was also PMCare GP of the Year Award presentation to honour our outstanding panel GPs. It was the third of its kind being organized by us. Selecting the winner was not easy. We made our choice after considering many elements of practice including recommendations by our clients and participation in our various health initiatives. The final selection was made and Dr Venkateswara Rao's clinic, Poliklinik Sri Permai, Puchong, Selangor emerged as the winner of PMCare GP of the Year Award 2010. The clinic was selected based on the facilities provided and quality services to our Members, no disruption of services to our Members, reasonable charges, efficiency, and participations in our wellness programmes. Poliklinik Sri Permai has been on PMCare panel since year 2004. The award was presented by PMCare's Chief Executive Officer, Encik Wan Shukri Ariffin.

In Dr Venkateswara Rao's acceptance speech, he advocated community outreach programmes. He also felt proud that the acknowledgement was not only for himself but actually for all the doctors because there was no other similar award for GP clinics that acknowledge contributions from the clinics and doctors. His clinic scored maximum points for regular participations in our wellness programmes which we organized regularly for our corporate clients. We also organized medical camps for the Orang Asli.

Dr Venkateswara Rao also participated in our other medical relief programmes to reach out for the poor and the needy and provide care and relief to those in need in times of distress. He had also volunteered in our joint efforts with NGOs to participate in medical relief programmes locally as well as internationally in places like Gaza, earth quake relief mission in Indonesia and New Zealand, and tsunami relief efforts in Japan and Sri Lanka.



## SLEEP HYGIENE

Sleep hygiene is the expression given to healthy daytime living and a good pre-sleep routine, both of which influence a good night's sleep. How you live your life during the day affects your sleep program by night.

- Establish a routine for waking and sleeping. Your body will thrive on a regular pattern. Decide how much sleep is good for you, whether 6, 7 or 8 hours a night.
- Start your day early every morning including weekends. Your natural body rhythm needs regularity, and the levels of activity hormones rise in the early morning in preparation for giving you a tonic and a wake-up call.
- If you go to bed after midnight, you are losing out on the healing period of sleep.
- Always listen to your body. If you find yourself sleepy during the early evening, then go to bed. You will benefit from going with the flow.
- Have a catnap during the day if this is what your body is telling you.
- Keep to a healthy diet, low in stimulants.
- Drink lots of water throughout the earlier part of the day, stopping around 6 pm.
- Make a list of the things that are on your mind so that your mind can stop worrying about them.
- The final hour before bedtime needs to be a self-indulgent hour where you focus on yourself and your pre-sleep routine. Concentrate on pleasurable activities which pamper you, make you feel good and get your mind and body into a state of calm and relaxation ready for sleep.
- If you feel that you need a light snack, keep it very light and full of sleep-inducing properties. Drinks should be selected for their sedative effects.
- Your cleansing routine should be relaxing. A bath is more relaxing and less physically demanding than a shower and you can use relaxing essential oils in the bath. For a relaxing effect in your bathroom, you could place some tea lights or candles around the bath.
- Watching television is not helpful for sleep. It engages the mind in too much activity, but of course this depends on what you are watching.

### Bedtime television rules:

- keep the television out of the bedroom
- avoid programs which are stimulating, noisy or frightening
- don't watch a program beyond your bedtime
- don't allow yourself to fall asleep in front of the television



- Reading before bed can be relaxing or stimulating, depending on the book. Bedtime reading rules:
  - don't read books that you can't put down
  - don't fall asleep trying to finish the chapter
  - avoid books which could give you nightmares
  - don't read anything to do with work
- In your bedroom you could have soft lighting, controlled by a dimmer switch, gentle music playing, some candles, a totally clutter-free room (which you tidied up earlier in the day), some essential oil burning in a vaporizer, your relaxing book next to your bed, a tidy, comfortable, inviting bed with softly coloured bed linen.
- Have a notepad and pencil next to the bed for those thoughts and ideas that come to you in the middle of night and which you try to remember. This keeps you awake. Once you have made a note of them, your mind relaxes.
- If you find that you go to bed but cannot sleep, try some breathing exercises or visualization. If you still cannot sleep, get up and do something until you feel sleepy again. Lying in bed, trying to sleep, unable to do so and being stressed about it will increase sleeplessness. Don't be tempted to keep looking at the clock to see how long you have been awake. We all underestimate the amount of sleep we have actually had and we sometimes believe we have stayed awake when in fact we have drifted off to sleep and woken up again.
- As you settle down for sleep, always say a quiet thank you for the day. This makes you focus on the nice parts of your day rather than dwelling on the negative parts.

Most sleep problems can be overcome with self-help and without resorting to medication. Do not allow the doctor to write you a prescription for medication when he could refer you to a sleep clinic, a session of counseling or some complementary therapy. Always try an alternative approach.