

## How Does Sleep Apnea Impair Weight Loss and Energy

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I have written about the relationship between obstructive sleep apnea, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Successfully treated sleep apnea has a correlation with losing weight and having more energy and vitality, even if diet and exercise have failed.

A thesis I prepared in 2000 indicated that half to two thirds of sleep apnea type patients were overweight, to some degree. Obese sleep-deprived patients have poor appetite control and even rely on food as a stimulant. As a result, for those individuals weight loss is particularly difficult. Restoration of sleep has enabled some of these patients to lose weight.

The case report in the thesis showed how successful treatment of mild obstructive sleep apnea with an oral appliance can improve a patient's ability for lifestyle change and weight loss. Use of the oral appliance to manage their apnea facilitated their weight loss and potentially reduced their risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

While asleep, apnea events become more frequent and dramatic as the body moves to deeper levels of sleep, requiring increasing adrenaline type hormone levels needed to offset the events. Apnea stimulates an instantaneous upsurge of these hormones to open the throat and stimulate the cardiovascular system while bringing the body to a more awake state and robbing it of deep sleep. It also triggers tossing and turning (to alter posture) and clenching and grinding which increase the caliper of the throat allowing more air into the lungs and decreasing apnea.

The impact of this is both immediate and chronic. The wear and tear on our body and subsequent effect on all body systems is enormous. All of this requires the body to be active with increased muscle tone muscle activity and muscle contractions that require sugar, which places an increased load on the pancreas as well. This can lead to type II diabetes and increased hunger, appetite and weight gain. And, the apneic individual is sleep deprived with tiredness, sleepiness, reduced mental focus and other related symptoms.

It is easy to understand how improved oral function can eliminate apnea during sleep, which improves your ability to achieve weight loss. The absence of apnea and the wear and tear on the body from needed life-saving compensations makes it easier to do regular exercise and provides an opportunity to achieve better nutrition.

So, if you snore, have less energy and are overweight, one thing you can do to help you finally be able to lose weight is to look into oral appliance therapy. It can help you sleep better, feel more rested, have less food craving – it can make weight loss easier and may save you from a lot of other complications down the road.