Sleep apnea is the failure to breathe normally while asleep. This means vital organs might not get the oxygen they need. When you stop breathing during sleep, your body responds by raising your heart rate and blood pressure, which puts stress on your heart.

If not treated, sleep apnea can increase the risk for high blood pressure, heart disease such as heart attacks and heart failure, stroke, and diabetes.

**Symptoms**

*The most common symptoms are:*
- Loud snoring
- Restless sleep
- Morning headaches
- Sleepiness or lack of energy during the day
- Waking up with dry mouth or sore throat
- Irritability
- Mood changes
- Decreased interest in sex
- Insomnia

**Causes**

*Common causes for sleep apnea are:*
- Being overweight
- Enlarged tonsils and adenoids, more common in children
- Alcohol intake
- Smoking

**Treatments**

To treat sleep apnea, your health care provider may suggest that you lose weight, stop smoking, and decrease drinking. If the problem does not improve with these strategies, other therapies such as Positive Airway Pressure machines, commonly called CPAP or Bi-PAP, and even surgery could be advised.

If you or your loved one have any of these symptoms, talk to your health care provider to determine if further testing is needed.