

Sweet Dreams: The Connection Between Sleep-Disordered Breathing and Obesity

Sleep is essential for our health and well-being, and a good night's sleep can leave us feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. However, sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) prevents people from getting the rest they need. According to the Sleep Foundation, there's a [strong connection between sleep-disordered breathing and obesity](#).

The connection between sleep, breathing, and obesity is complex, with each factor influencing the others. For example, obesity can increase the risk of sleep apnea, leading to sleep deprivation and weight gain. Continue reading to learn more about **the connection between SDB and obesity**.

What Is Sleep-Disordered Breathing?

Sleep-disordered breathing is a term used to describe a range of sleep disorders that cause breathing problems during sleep, including obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), central sleep apnea (CSA), and hypopnea.

With OSA, the upper airway becomes partially or completely blocked during sleep, leading to interruptions in breathing. In CSA, the brain fails to send the correct signals to the muscles that control breathing, causing pauses in breathing. With hypopnea, breathing becomes shallow or slow, leading to decreased oxygen levels.

What Is Obesity?

Obesity is a condition in which a person has excess body fat that can have a negative impact on their health. It's typically defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. Obesity can lead to multiple health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders.

SDB and Obesity

Obesity is one of the leading risk factors for SDB, as excess body fat can compress the airway and increase the likelihood of breathing interruptions during sleep. According to the Journal for Clinical Sleep Medicine, up to [38% of the adult population is affected by OSA](#).

Not only is obesity a cause of SDB, but sleep deprivation caused by SDB can contribute to obesity. In addition, research has found that SDB can lead to hormonal changes that

increase appetite and cravings for high-calorie foods, making it more challenging for individuals to maintain a healthy weight.

A study published by the National Institutes of Health found that individuals with untreated OSA had abnormally [high levels of the hunger hormone ghrelin and lower levels of the satiety hormone leptin](#), leading to increased hunger and decreased feelings of fullness.

Help Us Promote the Benefits of Airway Health

If you suspect that you or a loved one may have a sleep disorder, take our [free screening survey](#) to find out if you're at risk. Then, search our [free provider directory](#) to find a care provider near you to ensure optimum health!

Join [The Foundation for Airway Health's](#) mission to ensure everyone understands how breathing impacts health and development. Your [donation](#) allows us to spread the word about the importance of breathing for overall health, conduct valuable research, and ensure access to care.