

Sleep Evaluation and Testing

Sleep Medicine & Pulmonary Care

What does an evaluation involve?

The evaluation begins when you fill out a sleep questionnaire. A physician trained in sleep medicine will then review the information you give. That doctor will interview you and perform a physical examination. Your referring physician will also send medical records related to your problem to The Sleep Center at Valley Medical Center. Depending on the nature of your sleep-related problem, treatment may begin at this point, or you may be asked to undergo testing to further understand what happens to you when you sleep. Such testing often consists of a polysomnogram, an all-night sleep test). In some special cases other diagnostic testing, such as a daytime nap study, may be required. Other tests, such as laboratory testing or pulmonary function testing may also be ordered. After completion of this testing, your physician will discuss the results with you and recommend the appropriate treatment.

What is a polysomnogram?

A polysomnogram is a comprehensive, all-night testing procedure. Electrodes and sensors are attached to the head, chest, abdomen, and legs to continuously monitor and record brain activity, various types of muscle activity, eye movements, breathing patterns, heartbeat, and oxygen level. There is no pain associated with the test. None of the electrodes or sensors go into or through the skin. All are attached to the surface of the skin or scalp. No hair is cut, no skin is broken, and no electricity enters the body. With the exception of feeling the attached sensors (much the same as you notice the clothing you wear), you should experience no unpleasant symptoms.



Will my nightly routine be altered by the test?

Everything possible is done to ensure your stay is pleasant. We try to reproduce your usual sleep routine in our center. In most cases it is not necessary to exactly duplicate your sleep at home. In fact, your normal routine might be disruptive to the testing procedure. Staff will monitor you throughout the testing procedure and are immediately available to assist with your needs.

What happens after my evaluation?

Your sleep doctor will review the results of your evaluation with you at a follow-up appointment. If you are diagnosed with sleep apnea, your physician may prescribe "CPAP" therapy. A Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machine gently pushes air through a tube and into a mask worn around your nose and/or mouth, to help you breathe normally while you sleep. CPAP helps you rest, so that you awake alert and refreshed.

Does a doctor have to refer me?

Many patients are referred by their primary care physician or healthcare provider. However, we do accept patients who come to us directly with their sleep-related problems.

Will my insurance be billed?

You will be billed for all technical aspects of the polysomnogram, or other tests ordered through The Sleep Center. Professional charges-physicians interviewing patients, interpreting sleep tests, and other studies done in the laboratory-may be billed separately.

Do you suspect you or your partner have a sleep problem?

Take our sleep quiz

Sleep Apnea

- Do you regularly snore?
- Do you wake up choking, gasping, or wake up from your own snoring?
- Have people witnessed you stop breathing while sleeping?
- Do you frequently experience fatigue, daytime sleepiness, or low energy?
- Have you ever nodded off while driving?
- Do you frequently experience night sweats, morning headaches or need to go to the bathroom multiple times a night?
- Do you have high blood pressure or a history of heart disease or stroke?
- Are you significantly overweight?

Insomnia

- Do you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep three or more nights a week?
- Do you wake frequently at night and have difficulty returning to sleep?
- Do you suffer from fatigue, sleepiness, irritability, or poor concentration?
- Do you regularly use sleeping pills, either prescription or over the counter?
- Do you drink alcohol in the evening to help relax and fall asleep?
- Do you get frustrated with your poor sleep or are you apprehensive about going to sleep because of an expectation of poor sleep?
- Do you find it difficult to fall asleep at night but once asleep, have great difficulty awakening in the morning?

If you answered 'yes' to three or more questions under the Sleep Apnea section, or one or more questions under the insomnia section, **you may have a sleep disorder.**

- **Sleep apnea** is a common disorder in which the upper airway and throat muscles relax and collapse during sleep, physically blocking attempts to breathe. This irregular breathing disrupts sleep and results in daytime sleepiness, fatigue, irritability, poor concentration, and other symptoms of sleep deprivation. Sleep apnea also deprives the body of oxygen and is a risk factor for high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and early death.
- Most people suffer from **insomnia** at some stage in their life, but 10-15% of Americans experience chronic insomnia that affects quality of life. Insomnia can be caused by a variety of factors such as stress, medical disorders, medication side effects, poor sleep habits, or internal sleep disorders such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome. Identifying and treating the underlying cause of insomnia is more effective than routine use of sleeping pills.