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Olean, NY: Olean Medical Group Introduces Home Sleep Studies

Research indicates that more than 20 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea or sleep deprived illnesses. Until recently, an overnight sleep study in a lab was the only means to properly detect these disorders, but now, Home Sleep Tests (HST) have become more prevalent. Olean Medical Group has just introduced home sleep studies for its patients.

Home sleep studies are gaining momentum because they offer a patient the ability to remain in the comfort of one's own bedroom with a small device – and they are far less expensive than in-center overnight studies. Home studies are far more convenient for the patient, although the total amount of data is slightly less. However, home studies are well-suited to detect the presence of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), where the airway collapses or becomes blocked.

Sleep apnea is a common disorder in which a person experiences one or more breathing pauses or shallow breaths while sleeping. Its symptoms are snoring, daytime sleepiness, morning headaches, memory or learning problems or not being able to concentrate, feeling irritable or depressed, waking up frequently to urinate, dry mouth, or sore throat upon waking. Untreated, sleep apnea can: increase the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, obesity and diabetes; worsen heart failure; make irregular heartbeats more likely; and increase the chance of having work-related or driving accidents.

HST measures oxygen saturation, heart rate, air flow, and breathing effort. It will also record snoring and position. Any primary care provider can refer the patient for a study and for most, a sleep study is a key diagnostic component of a sleep disorder evaluation. The information collected during a study is reviewed and analyzed by sleep specialists.

The portable monitor is user-friendly and easy to attach. Patients are given a device during an office visit and are instructed how to put it on by a technologist and they will be provided a sheet with step-by-step directions. The unit is small and light and there are basically 4 steps to begin the study: 1) Place a belt around your mid-section. 2) Attach a clip on your finger. 3) Apply an airflow sensor under your nose. 4) Turn the machine on. Should you have any problems or if you have any questions, you will be given a 24 hour phone number to call for assistance.

The patient returns or mails the device back to the Olean Medical Group the following day. The study is then 'scored and interpreted' by a board certified sleep specialist. The patient returns within two weeks to see the provider, who reviews the result of the study with the patient and selects appropriate treatment. The return appointment is scheduled at the time you pick up the sleep device.

Typically, patients do not have a difficult time sleeping with this device attached because it is so small. Four uninterrupted hours of sleep are needed for a good evaluation for the study. Patients who believe they are candidates for this home testing or have questions about this device should call their primary care provider at Olean Medical Group.