



Obstructive Sleep Apnea linked to Cardiovascular Disease

There is a significant amount of evidence that demonstrates how Obstructive Sleep Apnea or “OSA” plays an important role in cardiovascular disease.

In a recent publication, Dr. Sean M. Caples, of the [Mayo Clinic College of Medicine](#) in Rochester, Minnesota, says "in addition to their association with systemic hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea-related stressors ... have varying effects on heart oxygen supply and demand, particularly in the already compromised heart". OSA also contributes to daytime sleepiness, alertness and concentration deficiencies, and an increased risk of hypertension, stroke and diabetes. There is abundant physiologic evidence implicating obstructive sleep apnea in perpetuating, if not inciting, heart failure.

The cardiovascular specialists at **First Coast Cardiovascular Institute, PA** recognize the link between OSA and heart disease and have an active program for screening and diagnosing those patients who are at risk for this disease. A typical evaluation for OSA includes standard questionnaires and a physical examination. Those patients who are at risk for this disease are then evaluated by a cardiovascular specialist who may also refer the patient to a pulmonologist who is board certified in sleep medicine if indicated. When further testing is required the sleep tests can be performed at the First Coast Cardiovascular Institute’s sleep disorders laboratory.

The specialists at **First Coast Cardiovascular Institute, PA** developed the sleep breathing disorders laboratory because it saw a need for a state of the art facility in a comfortable environment. The laboratory is staffed by registered technologists and all studies are interpreted by board certified sleep specialists. The lab has private comfortable rooms with quality furnishings where patients are monitored throughout the night.

Safe and effective treatments are available for those with OSA. Scientific evidence shows that continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) is the best treatment for OSA. CPAP provides a steady stream of pressurized air to patients through a mask that they wear during sleep and this airflow keeps the airway open, preventing the pauses in breathing that characterize sleep apnea and restoring normal oxygen levels.

For those patients who have OSA, the sleep laboratory at **First Coast Cardiovascular Institute** is equipped with technology that measures the effectiveness of CPAP on the patient and can determine the amount of pressure needed for the CPAP to be most effective. Those patients needing CPAP are referred to providers who can then provide and train patients with the CPAP.

At First Coast Cardiovascular Institute we recognize that patients and referring physicians have a choice when it comes to cardiovascular care. We sincerely thank you for the trust you have placed in us and we will continue to work to keep this trust.