

# First Coast Cardiovascular Institute

## SLEEPING YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHIER HEART

It may seem just a nuisance, but your nightly loud snoring may signal a more serious health problem called sleep apnea.

The disorder causes breathing to get very shallow or even stop during your sleep cycle, disrupting your good night's sleep and causing havoc on your body's circulatory system.

Although sleep apnea may cause you to feel tired & fatigued once awake, new research has linked the disorder to depression, high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, coronary artery disease, increased risk of motor vehicle accidents, heart failure and even sudden death among other medical conditions.

Recognizing this condition and taking corrective action can be a life-saver, in addition to improving your everyday energy level.

At First Coast Cardiovascular Institute, diagnostic tests and effective treatments are available at the facility's state-of-the-art Sleep Lab, located at 3900 University Blvd. South. The state-of-the-art center is staffed by two board certified sleep disorder specialists who are ready to help you diagnose and treat this common disorder.

Sleep apnea means you often stop breathing for 10 seconds or longer from 5 to 50 times an hour. The most common cause of sleep apnea is large tonsils or adenoids or a large uvula, often linked to obesity. A less common type of apnea, called central sleep apnea, occurs in people who have had a stroke, heart failure, brain tumor or infection. Certain medications or alcohol intake before bed also can contribute. Undiagnosed Sleep Apnea patient who are facing surgery or anesthesia may face increase risk for the planned surgeries. So, informing your surgeon before any surgery of the disorder is very important.

While breathing stops, this causes low blood oxygen levels, which can eventually raise blood pressure and damage blood vessels. This, in turn, can contribute to cardiovascular disease or even stroke.



The main symptoms of sleep apnea are: being so sleepy during the day you fall asleep while working or driving; feeling tired in the morning; or waking up with a headache. Your bed partner may notice that while you sleep you: stop breathing; often snore loudly; gasp or choke; or toss and turn.

The sudden drops in blood-oxygen levels can increase blood pressure, strain the cardiovascular system and can damage heart muscle. These dangers present even more reasons to seek help for the disorder. And with treatments improving, if you have sought help before, now is the time to try again.

People with OSA or central sleep apnea may also complain of memory problems, morning headaches, mood swings or feeling of depression, a need to urinate frequently at night (nocturia), and impotence. Gastroesophageal reflux (GERD) may be more prevalent in people with sleep apnea. Children with untreated sleep apnea may be hyperactive and may be diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

For more information, call the Sleep Lab, 3900 University Blvd. S., at (904)493-3333 or visit [www.firstcoastcardio.com](http://www.firstcoastcardio.com)

*Giving You New Hope*

**904-493-3333 • WWW.FIRSTCOASTCARDIO.COM**

### BEACH PRACTICE

14011 Beach Blvd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32250

### BEACH PRACTICE

905 Beach Blvd., Suite B  
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

### MAIN PRACTICE

3900 University Blvd., S, Jacksonville, FL 32216

### FLEMING ISLAND/ORANGE PARK PRACTICE

1681 Eagle Harbor Pkwy. E., Suite B  
Orange Park, FL 32003  
904-644-0092

### MANDARIN PRACTICE

9765 San Jose Blvd., Suite 107  
Jacksonville, FL 32257

### NORTHSIDE PRACTICE

1215 Dunn Ave., Suite 8  
Jacksonville, FL 32218