



**Dr. Richard Lipman M.D.**  
Diplomat of American Board of Internal Medicine  
[www.richardlipmanmd.com](http://www.richardlipmanmd.com)

7241 SW 63 Ave Suite 202  
South Miami, FL 33143  
(305) 670-3259  
[medoffice728@gmail.com](mailto:medoffice728@gmail.com)

## Do I Have Sleep Apnea?

Please answer YES or NO to the following questions. Each YES answer counts as 1 point. Total your score at the bottom to see if further evaluation is recommended.

1. Do you snore loudly (louder than talking or loud enough to be heard through closed doors)? YES [ ] NO [ ]
2. Do you often feel tired, fatigued, or sleepy during the daytime? YES [ ] NO [ ]
3. Has anyone observed you stop breathing during your sleep? YES [ ] NO [ ]
4. Do you have or are you being treated for high blood pressure? YES [ ] NO [ ]
5. Is your Body Mass Index (BMI) over 30? YES [ ] NO [ ]
6. Are you age 50 or older? YES [ ] NO [ ]
7. Is your neck circumference greater than 17 inches (male) or 16 inches (female)? YES [ ] NO [ ]
8. Are you male? YES [ ] NO [ ]
9. Do you have morning headaches? YES [ ] NO [ ]
10. Do you wake up with a dry mouth or sore throat? YES [ ] NO [ ]
11. Do you have difficulty staying asleep (maintenance insomnia)? YES [ ] NO [ ]
12. Do you frequently wake up to urinate during the night (nocturia)? YES [ ] NO [ ]
13. Have you been told that you breathe through your mouth while sleeping? YES [ ] NO [ ]
14. Do you experience mood changes, such as depression or irritability? YES [ ] NO [ ]
15. Do you have trouble concentrating or memory problems? YES [ ] NO [ ]

***Total YES answers: \_\_\_\_\_ If you answered YES to 5 or more questions, you may be at risk for sleep apnea and should consult a healthcare professional.***

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[https://www.richardlipmanmd.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Sleep\\_Apnea\\_Questionnaire\\_with\\_Score.pdf](https://www.richardlipmanmd.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Sleep_Apnea_Questionnaire_with_Score.pdf)

## Why Excess Weight Causes Sleep Apnea

Several health conditions increase the likelihood of developing sleep apnea, but OSA is most common in people who are overweight or obese. Excess weight creates fat deposits in a person's neck called pharyngeal fat. Pharyngeal fat can block a person's upper airway during sleep when the airway is already relaxed. This is

why **snoring** is one of the most common sleep apnea symptoms — air is literally being squeezed through a restricted airway, causing a loud noise.

Additionally, increased abdominal girth from excess fat can compress a person's chest wall, decreasing lung volume. This reduced lung capacity diminishes airflow. OSA risk continues to increase with a rising body mass. Even a 10% weight gain is associated with a six-fold increase. Less common causes of sleep apnea include enlarged tonsils that block the airway, anatomical features such as a large neck or narrow throat, endocrine disorders (including diabetes and thyroid disease), acid reflux, lung diseases, and heart problems.

## Can Sleep Apnea Cause Weight Gain?

While excess weight has long been known to be a risk factor for OSA, an increasing amount of evidence suggests the **relationship is reciprocal**. This is because sleep deprivation is associated with decreased leptin (an appetite-suppressing hormone) and increased ghrelin (an appetite-stimulating hormone), which may increase cravings for calorie-dense foods. Additional data indicates that insufficient sleep leads to overeating, obesity, and a decrease in fat-loss during calorie restriction.

It also appears that OSA patients, in particular, may be more susceptible to weight gain than people who have the same BMI and health status but do not suffer from sleep apnea. This is illustrated in one study that showed people with OSA gained significantly more weight (around 16 pounds in the year leading up to their OSA diagnosis compared with BMI-matched people without OSA).

Sleep apnea can also deplete people of the energy they need to maintain a healthy body weight. Daytime sleepiness is a common sleep apnea symptom, resulting from fragmented, unrefreshing sleep. Excessive sleepiness may lead sleep apnea sufferers to exert less physical activity during waking hours. This may be particularly problematic for obese people, who frequently experience more shortness of breath and chest discomfort with physical effort, resulting in limited exercise. Without dietary changes, decreased activity levels can lead to additional weight gain.

