

Cardiothoracic and Neurosciences Services

Newcastle Regional Sleep Service

Introduction

The Newcastle Sleep Service offers a comprehensive service for the diagnosis and treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea hypopnoea syndrome (OSAHS) and related conditions, as well as other sleep disorders, such as narcolepsy, insomnia and restless legs syndrome. This leaflet explains more about the service we offer.

Due to the highly specialised nature of the service, we see patients from across the region. We provide care and treatment for over 10,000 patients with sleep apnoea, making us the largest provider of this service for the North of England.

We have an experienced multi-disciplinary team encompassing respiratory physicians, neurologists, clinical physiologists, specialist nurse, pharmacist and other support staff who provide clinical assessment, diagnostic investigations, treatment and long term support.

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) is a common condition, in which the airway is narrowed during sleep, making breathing more difficult. People typically snore, stop breathing (apnoea) and then wake up with a choking or gasping noise. They then fall asleep again and the process repeats. If severe, this may happen hundreds of times a night. People are often not aware of waking up, but this can lead to restless and disturbed sleep. The typical main complaints of someone with OSA are: un-refreshing sleep and daytime sleepiness, whereas partners may be particularly aware of the repeated snoring and stopping breathing episodes.

Causes

OSA can be caused by excessive soft tissue or fat around the neck causing airway narrowing during sleep, large tonsils or tongue causing airway obstruction, or a small mouth and jaw, meaning when the throat muscles relax during sleep, there is relatively little space and the airway therefore becomes obstructed. Often it is a combination of these factors. Weight gain makes it worse.

Diagnosis

OSA is diagnosed from taking a history from a person about their sleep, including a measure of how sleepy they are, and by an overnight sleep study to look for the typical signs of sleep disturbance.

Treatment

OSA can be successfully treated. The type of treatment depends on the severity of the daytime sleepiness and the severity of the sleep disturbance on the sleep study. For mild OSA, simple measures such as changing sleeping position, avoiding alcohol and losing weight may be all that is required. For more severe OSA, a special face mask with tubing to a machine that opens the upper airway with pressurised air during sleep may be

recommended. This is called continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP). Using this at night means normal sleep may return. We are experienced in the long term care and management of patients on CPAP therapy.

Sleep Studies

We may proceed directly to a sleep study following a referral or assessment in clinic/by telephone. Sleep studies are performed either in your own home or in hospital. There is a waiting list for these tests, so if you are unable to attend please contact us to make alternative arrangements.

The sleep study involves attaching some simple painless monitoring equipment to assess your breathing and sleep quality during the night. Various measurements are made - they differ slightly according to whether you are having your study in hospital or at home.

They include:

- oxygen level in the blood. This is done by a probe attached to the finger
- flow of air at the nose.
- movement of your chest / abdomen to assess coordination of your breathing

In some hospital studies, we also include measurements of EEG ("brain waves") and a recording of your posture and movements using a video. All the measurements are obtained by small devices attached to the skin and none involves any discomfort. Some people need a blood test in the morning when they wake up to look at oxygen and carbon dioxide levels.

Home sleep study

You will receive a date to attend the hospital to collect the equipment. You will receive instructions on how to use the equipment. You will need to use it that night and bring it back the next day to be looked at. Please return the equipment as agreed as it will have been assigned to another patient for their sleep investigations the next day.

Hospital sleep study

You will receive a date to attend ward 29, Cardiothoracic Centre, Freeman Hospital for an overnight stay. This is a working medical ward, with dedicated beds for sleep studies. On the morning of your admission please contact Ward 29 on 0191 213 7029 to confirm that there is a bed available. **Please arrive at 6.30pm and get changed ready for bed. The sleep study equipment will be set up by one of the clinical team.**

- **What to bring to hospital**

You will only need to bring your wash things, night wear, a dressing gown and slippers. **Any regular medications should be brought with you and taken as normal unless otherwise advised.** You may want to take evening tablets before coming in to hospital. Bring a book or magazine to occupy yourself until the team have set up the equipment. Bring your own pillow if you wish. Please restrict the amount of property you bring into hospital as we have limited storage space on the wards. We suggest you do not bring valuables (money over £20, jewellery, credit cards etc) into hospital or you ask your relatives to take them home. If this is not possible please inform the nurse admitting you to the ward.

- **During the night**

The nurses do not routinely check on you during the night as it is important your sleep study is not disturbed. In case you need to call a nurse during the night, you will be shown the call button. You may want to bring ear plugs to help you sleep.

- **Hospital car parks**

Spaces are available in the car park at the front of the hospital, with additional spaces available on levels 0, 1 and 2 of the multi storey car park at the rear of the hospital. You pay on leaving. Blue badge holders can park for free in disabled marked bays in the main car parks. Please refer to the Trust website for current car parking charges.

<http://www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk>

Sleep Study results

The sleep studies are reported by one of the senior sleep team. Depending on the findings, you will either be sent a letter about the results, an appointment to discuss them, or to start CPAP.

Important – About Driving

Some people referred to the sleep service have daytime sleepiness, which can affect safe driving. The DVLA guidance regarding driving says: "Anyone with excessive sleepiness having or likely to have an adverse impact on driving should not drive". It is your responsibility to ensure you are fit to drive for every journey. It could be dangerous to drive when sleepy (whatever the cause), for you and other road users. If you are sleepy when driving, we recommend you stop driving until you are investigated and treated. This is your legal duty.

The DVLA recommend notifying them if you have a confirmed diagnosis of moderate or severe OSA. Driving can continue as normal once the OSA is treated (for all types of licence holders) and sleepiness has improved. The full DVLA recommendations can be accessed on the Sleep Apnoea Trust site: <https://sleep-apnoea-trust.org/driving-and-sleep-apnoea/detailed-guidance-to-uk-drivers-with-sleep-apnoea/>

For further information

Contact details

If you have any further concerns or questions, please contact:

Administrator	0191 2231823	Monday-Friday, 7.30am - 3.30pm
Secretary	0191 2138973	Monday-Friday, 8.00am - 4.00pm

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) for help, advice and information about NHS services. You can contact them on freephone 0800 032 02 02, e-mail northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk or text to 01670511098

Useful Websites:

Sleep Apnoea Trust: <https://sleep-apnoea-trust.org/>

Asthma and Lung UK: <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/osa>

If you would like further information about health conditions and treatment options, you may wish to have a look at the NHS website at www.nhs.uk

On this website there is an information prescription generator www.nhs.uk/ips which brings together a wealth of approved patient information from the NHS and charity partners which you may find helpful

If you would like to find accessibility information for our hospitals, please visit www.disabledgo.com

This leaflet is available in alternative formats on request by telephoning 0191 213 7219

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