


DENTAL HYGIENISTS: SCREEN FOR SLEEP APNEA

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is partial or complete **obstruction of the airway during sleep**. (1) OSA affects sleep quality and is linked with **overall health** and conditions like **periodontal disease** because oxidative stress **raises** the level of **inflammatory cytokines** in the bloodstream, contributing to **chronic inflammation**. (2) OSA and periodontal disease **share similar risk factors** like diabetes, tobacco smoking, and obesity. (3) Mouth breathing due to OSA increases **xerostomia**, in turn **increasing periodontal pathogens**. (3)

The incidence of severe periodontitis is

7x greater  **in clients with moderate to severe OSA than clients without. (1)**

Up to 49% of men and 23% of women have OSA, and many don't know. (1)



Role of the RDH

- Screen for warning signs
- Educate clients about risks
- Advocate for referrals
- Think critically about OSA

Associated Risks (2)

- Reduced cognitive functioning
- Mental illness
- Abnormal glucose metabolism
- Hypertension
- Coronary artery disease
- Stroke
- Arrhythmias

OSA Screening (4)



☐ snoring

☐ daytime tiredness

☐ obstruction during sleep

☐ high blood pressure

☐ high BMI (>35)

☐ age over 50

☐ neck circumference (>40 cm)

☐ gender (male)



Refer to MD if **five** or more symptoms are present

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF OSA,
visit **HealthLinkBC.ca**

References:

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