

National Sleep Week Emphasizes Health Risks of Untreated Sleep Disorders

Good sleep is critical to maintaining good health. Snoring or constant fatigue may be a sign of sleep apnea and symptoms should be screened by a doctor.

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, April 19, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Many people are unaware that when they sleep, they literally gasp for air, which deprives the brain of oxygen, unleashing a chain reaction in the body linking to a host of serious health issues including strokes, depression, heart attacks, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and ADHD in children.

For most of his adult life, 62-year-old Bill Weimar of Arlington, Virginia was unaware he had a sleep disorder. Because he wants to prevent others from suffering as he did, Mr. Weimar is joining the voices of medical professionals who are urging Americans to take the time to get tested and treated for obstructive sleep apnea during National Sleep Week (April 23-29). View [Photos](https://goo.gl/Mp0aaQ) <https://goo.gl/Mp0aaQ>

According to statistics from the American Sleep and Breathing Academy, [obstructive sleep disorders](#) affect about 18 million Americans, and that number is on the rise. Additionally, one in 50 people are undiagnosed and untreated.

“When your brain doesn't get sufficient oxygen, every organ in your body suffers and this can lead to serious health complications and sometimes death,” said [Dr. Elliott Alpher](#), a Washington, D.C. Diplomate in Craniofacial Pain and Dental Sleep Medicine, who has been treating obstructive sleep apnea, facial and jaw pain for three decades. “Unless you get a proper diagnosis and treatment, you are a walking dead person.”

Mr. Weimar's journey to health and a good night's sleep began in 1999 with a heart attack. Afterward, he followed his doctor's recommendation for a rigorous fitness and dietary routine. Despite that, the active commercial pilot, husband and father of two stayed tired all the time. “My poor wife! I don't know how she put up with me,” Mr. Weimar said. “I snored so loudly my daughter even complained. I never realized I had a sleep apnea problem that was literally draining me of so much of my life.”

It would be another decade before Mr. Weimar received the diagnosis and treatment that saved his life. In the interim, life sent him more challenges and tragedies. In 2004, he underwent two surgical procedures to implant cardiac stents that opened his clogged arteries. Then came tragedy. In 2007, after a two-year fight, Mr. Weimar's wife of 22-years died of ovarian cancer. He spiraled into a deep depression, stopped exercising and lived only for his two children.

In 2010, Mr. Weimar was diagnosed with prostate cancer and one of his doctors sent him for a sleep test. Like many people, he didn't realize that Obstructive Sleep Apnea is a killer. According to the National Commission on Sleep Disorders Research, about 38,000 deaths from heart problems, hypertension and strokes are linked to obstructive sleep disorders. In addition, people with untreated sleep apnea are six times more likely to die in a car accident. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says drowsy driving is the culprit for an estimated 100,000 accidents and 1,550 deaths each year.

For Mr. Weimar, the sleep study revealed the seriousness of his condition. "My oxygen level was 64%," Mr. Weimar recalled. However, he could not tolerate the standard treatment – a continuous breathing machine (CPAP), which tethered him to a continuous oxygen supply while he slept.

A recommendation from his therapist led Mr. Weimar to see Dr. Elliott Alpher, whose use of conservative, non-surgical techniques to treat TMD, TMJ and sleep disorders have helped thousands of people get healthy. He counts among his patients members of the NFL Players Association. After an extensive exam and computerized diagnostics to build a custom oral appliance, Mr. Weimar says Dr. Alpher literally gave him back his life.

"The first time I put the oral appliance in my mouth, my oxygen levels immediately went to 98%. My energy level increased and this allowed me to deal with my life. I came off the medications for depression. I have energy and focus," Mr. Weimar said. "I cannot begin to tell you how fortunate and how amazing I feel because of this device that I wear every night that helps me breathe and allows me to sleep. I must emphasize the importance of getting oxygen to the body, which needs rejuvenation and rest every day. If your partner is snoring, tell them and encourage them to get tested."

Lily Mai
The Alpher Center
202.795.7111
email us here

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