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Lifestyles

## Sour dreams

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**THE VILLAGES** — If you get up in the morning feeling unrested and fatigued, you probably are not getting the quantity and quality of sleep that your body needs. You may have a sleep disorder that could be threatening your life.

Denver C. Price is on a mission to promote public awareness and understanding of sleep disorders. As a respiratory therapist, Price is well aware of the hazards of breathing obstructions and not getting enough sleep.

Price presented his information at a recent seminar at the Royal Palm Restaurant at Hacienda Hills in The Villages as a part of the Community Sleep Awareness program of the National Sleep Foundation.

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“My goal is to create community awareness of sleep disorders,” Price said. “That is why I do these seminars.”

According to the National Sleep Foundation’s Web site, as many as one-third of adults sleep only 6.5 hours or less nightly. They also report that 45 percent of adults say they will sleep less in order to accomplish more.

This results in many sleepy American workers. At least two-thirds of adults say that being tired interferes with their concentration and makes coping with job stress more difficult.





Further figures from the NSF indicate that one out of five adults admit to making occasional or frequent errors at work because of sleeplessness, and as many as 40 percent of traffic accidents not related to alcohol are the result of sleepy people behind the wheel.

As a result of these findings, the NSF began a public education initiative to make Americans aware of the seriousness of being deprived of adequate sleep.

Price presented his seminar as part of this campaign, with help from the local Advanced Sleep Diagnostics Center, which recently opened an office in the Oakland Hills Professional Center.

### **Symptoms and signs**

“Snoring is a hallmark of people who are suffering from sleep apnea. Snoring is never normal,” Price said. “Now sometimes snoring doesn’t hurt you, but snoring is an abnormal thing. It is an airway obstruction.”

Though it seems snoring doesn’t usually bother the person who is doing it, Price said it can lead to a multitude of problems and could even result in death.

Snoring with the cessation of air flow can be a real problem, causing people to not get a good night’s sleep, which means they function poorly at work and feel fatigued most of the time.

There are other contributing factors for not getting enough sleep, including shift work, medications, primary central nervous system disorders and psychiatric disturbances.

Price said that feeling bad because of sleep deprivation happens so slowly that people forget what feeling good is like. They think it is a normal part of aging to feel fatigue most of the time, but that isn’t true.

“It is not normal to be tired and sleepy after you’ve slept all night,” Price said. “And if that’s happening to you, you should be tested.”

### **Obstructive sleep apnea**

Although Price said there are approximately 200 sleep disorders that affect people, he was primarily concerned with obstructive sleep apnea.

“Obstructive sleep apnea is a common sleep disorder, and weight is a contributing factor but not a cause,” Price said. “When people have vivid dream recall, they’ve usually been awakened during REM sleep. OSA is at its worst during REM sleep.”

During Rapid Eye Movement sleep, the brain is active and dreaming occurs. Discovering this gave scientists a marker for studying sleep and establishing patterns.

“People with sleep apnea are at 10 times greater risk for sudden death, and are six to seven times more likely to have a heart attack and five to six times more likely to have a stroke,” Price said.



If you snore and have excessive daytime sleepiness, you should be tested for OSA. Price also said many people who are diagnosed with drug-resistant hypertension should be tested for OSA, and treatment can help lower blood pressure.

“According to statistics, people who have had a stroke can reduce their chance of having another stroke by 80 percent if they treat their OSA,” Price said.

On a lighter note, Price said, “I also contend we can improve their golf game if they have a treatable sleep disorder, because they will be able to concentrate better.”

The Epworth Sleepiness Scale is a series of questions that patients answer to determine if their sleepiness could be the result of OSA. Patients are asked to rate the chance that they would doze off or fall asleep during different, routine daytime situations.

The situations people are asked to evaluate include sitting and reading, watching television and sitting quietly after lunch. Patients use a scale of 0-3, which goes from “would never doze” to “high chance of dozing.”

### **CPAP machine**

OSA can be treated effectively with an instrument called a CPAP, which stands for continuous positive airway pressure. It comes in a variety of sizes and effectively deals with breathing obstruction while sleeping.

Price said that people who suffer from cardiovascular disease also can benefit from using a CPAP if they are found to have OSA.

After getting a diagnosis of OSA, many people find they have difficulty learning how to effectively use their CPAP equipment.

“One of things we’ve done is try out all the implements so we know what it feels like,” said Kathy Price, a registered nurse at Advanced Sleep Diagnostics Center. “We know what they’re going through so we can help patients get comfortable.”

In order to be tested for sleep disorders, you must have a prescription from a physician.

For more information about sleep disorders, talk with your doctor or call Advanced Sleep Diagnostics Center at 751-0235.

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