

Sleep Apnea: A Startling Wakeup Call

(NAPSA)—Do you ever wake up more tired than before you went to sleep? Have friends or family members complained about your excessive snoring? Do you find yourself becoming forgetful or nodding off at work?

Unfortunately for businessman Will Headapohl, his excessive tiredness and snoring led to the diagnosis he was afraid of—obstructive sleep apnea. Will learned about sleep apnea while on a trip with his father, when he awoke to loud snoring interrupted by occasional gasps for breath. “At the time, I didn’t realize what was happening,” Will shared. “When my father was diagnosed with sleep apnea, my eyes were opened and I realized this was much more than just a nightly annoyance.”

Sleep apnea doesn’t just leave your body tired from a restless night of sleep. When you stop breathing, your heart beats faster, raising your blood pressure and increasing your chances of heart attack and stroke. Insufficient sleep can affect your job performance and ability to perform basic functions, like driving a car.

Years later, Will too began to feel the effects of poor sleep, and his friends and family were complaining about his snoring. “I was sharing a room with a colleague on a business trip who was completely aggravated by my snoring. I didn’t realize just how



Will’s sons Travis and Hunter inspire him to stay fit and healthy.

badly this disease affected me and those around me.” Will decided he needed to get help with his sleep apnea. He first chose a mouth guard, which helps reposition the lower jaw and tongue to aid with snoring and pauses in breathing.

“Still, I would wake up in the morning feeling like I got hit by a truck,” Will said. “I became forgetful at work and was unable to remember simple information like people’s names or conversations I had.”

Even though the mouth guard did not work, Will refused to be hooked up to a breathing machine while he slept. Instead, Will decided to investigate surgical options and opted to undergo tongue enhancement surgery. The recovery was brutal, with a month of difficulty eating, speaking and breathing. Unfortunately, Will’s sleep apnea remained just as aggressive.

Will was desperate. So much so, he even considered painful corrective jaw surgery. Just as he was on the brink of making another invasive decision, he met a man who managed a company dedicated to helping people with sleep apnea. His new friend convinced him to try what’s known as a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine.

Within days, Will felt more rested than he had in years. He was able to return to the activities he loved, like camping, bicycling, and spending quality time with his two children. As a self-proclaimed “Apnea Avenger,” Will now serves as a coach for Wake Up To Sleep, a support program that helps people along their entire sleep apnea journey—from awareness and diagnosis to successful treatment.

For more information, visit www.wakeuptosleep.com/learnmore to see how you can be on your way to a restful night’s sleep.

Sleep apnea facts and figures:

- One in five adults in the U.S. has mild sleep apnea.
- People with moderate to severe sleep apnea have an up to 15-fold increase of being involved in a traffic accident.
- Undiagnosed moderate to severe sleep apnea in middle-aged adults may cause \$3.4 billion in additional medical costs in the U.S.