

Have you been diagnosed with sleep apnea?

- » Sleep apnea is a disorder where a person's breathing stops and starts throughout their sleep cycles.
- » Sleep-disordered breathing causes changes to blood vessels and to oxygen levels in the blood, which in turn can lead to increased blood pressure.
- » If you have certain forms of sleep apnea you are at risk of developing pulmonary hypertension (PH).

What is PH?

- » Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a disease that can strike anyone regardless of age, sex, or background, with an estimated 10,000 Canadians currently affected.
- » PH is defined by high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs, which causes an enlargement and weakness of the right side of the heart. This can lead to heart failure or even death.
- » People with sleep apnea are at risk of developing a type of PH associated with lung disease. In such cases, doctors may focus on treating the underlying lung disease in order to improve or resolve the elevated pressure in the pulmonary arteries.

Symptoms

- Breathlessness
- Exercise intolerance
- Swollen feet/legs
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Chest pain
- Light headedness
- Blue lips/fingers

1. **Get informed:** Recognize the symptoms of PH. If you have sleep apnea and are experiencing these symptoms, talk to your doctor about PH.
2. **Get screened:** The primary screening test for PH is an echocardiogram. Additional tests may be required to measure the functioning of your heart and lungs. Getting sleep apnea diagnosed and appropriately treated is paramount.
3. **Get referred:** There are PH clinics all across Canada. For more information visit www.SometimesItsPH.ca.

