

News on sleep apnea for the commercial trucking industry



Good night sleep

One driver's journey through sleep apnea diagnosis and treatment

Sleep apnea cannot be handled like a bad haircut, according to commercial driver Ken Armstrong. "Time will not solve it."

Instead of letting one more day of shortened driving time and tiredness go by, the 57-year-old Swift driver became the first in his company to undergo the "Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics (PPD) treatment experience."

"I was originally diagnosed with sleep apnea in 1998 while living in Chicago," Armstrong said. "I had surgery to repair a deviated septum which partially corrected the condition. However, as I got older and gained weight, my sleep apnea gradually worsened to the point that further treatment was necessary."

Armstrong, with the help of PPD, went in for a sleep study.

"You show up. You talk to the technician," he said during a video interview with PPD. "The technician explains what's going to take place during the next 10 or 12 hours. You do it in a comfortable bedroom environment. There's nothing clinical about it. So it takes about 20 minutes to get all wired up. Then they shut the lights off and say 'here, you want to watch TV for a bit' until you get tired and go to sleep."

Continued on Page 3

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Precision Pulmonary Diagnostics (PPD), provides professional screening for drivers who are at risk for sleep apnea. This is a HIPPA-compliant, online tool customized to a company's requirements.

Once a driver has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, PPD will provide local diagnostic services with the ease of Web-based scheduling and quick, reliable turn-around — from diagnosis to treatment.

Drivers who require treatment will be fitted for and provided with a CPAP mask, flow generator, and heated humidifier for nightly use.

In order to ensure drivers are using their masks correctly, PPD has partnered with a leading manufacturer of CPAP equipment, masks, and the only provider of a patented wireless compliance monitoring system.

The wireless compliance monitoring system provides daily information of CPAP use, efficacy, and allows real-time troubleshooting of any problems your drivers may be experiencing. With this data, we can enhance your drivers' CPAP acceptance and long-term compliance. In short, our protocols can maximize your results and your return on investment.

Dear Readers,

Wishing all a Happy and Healthy 2011 !! PPD remains committed to servicing our drivers. We value your input as we strive to be the best in the industry.

In both my professional and personal life, dealing with change has to be one of the hardest things I have had to learn how to do. When you are diagnosed with sleep apnea and told you will now need to be on therapy, it can be an intimidating change.

A positive attitude helps one to cope a bit more readily with the daily affairs of life. It brings optimism into your life and makes it easier to avoid worry and negative thinking. If you adopt it as a new way of life, it will bring constructive changes into your life. A wise woman once shared with me something to practice every day. Each time a negative thought enters your mind, try to flip it around to a positive one because:

WHAT YOU THINK DETERMINES HOW YOU FEEL WHICH DETERMINES WHAT YOU WILL DO!!

Some strategies I have seen help master change include:

1. Step away, take a breath, and take some time to think realistically about the impact of the change and the strategy for moving forward. We often get caught up in the change itself and cannot think clearly enough to develop a strategy.
2. Adjust your mindset from viewing change as a problem to an opportunity.
3. Think about the different perspectives you could have around the change. What perspective do you choose to be in?
4. Keep sight of the long-term vision, not what the change causes short-term. How will your perspective be different a year from now?
5. Be open to learning. If we resist change, our energy is wrapped up in the effort to maintain the status quo. Think, "What can I learn from this?"
6. Change often causes stress. Ask yourself, "What can I control in this situation? What can I do to influence this situation? What do I have to accept about the situation?"
7. Focus on the present moment. Don't think about what has happened in the past or what could happen in the future.
8. Trust yourself. Developing an inner equilibrium is essential for being resilient in the midst of change. Trust everything will work out.
9. Improve your ability to respond to change. Stretch yourself in little ways every day. How will you respond to the terrible traffic? How will you react to trying something new?
10. Be open to self-change. In every experience with change, be open to learning and changing yourself. Ask yourself, "How can I grow from this change?"

Change is here to stay. We can't always control the circumstances, but what we can control is our perspective about change.

Happy New Year,

Wendy Sullivan, RM
VP Project Implementation



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What Will Obesity Cost in 2013?

Projected average cost (in dollars) of obesity-related health care, per adult, for each state.

AL	176	KY	208	ND	134
AK	134	LA	127	OH	213
AZ	161	ME	148	OK	226
AR	194	MD	199	OR	123
CA	149	MA	113	PA	142
CO	84	MI	155	RI	125
CT	105	MN	127	SC	160
DC	144	MS	186	SD	201
DE	74	MO	198	TN	153
FL	169	MT	143	TX	122
GA	143	NE	149	UT	140
HI	196	NV	139	VT	130
ID	142	NH	179	VA	83
IL	164	NJ	141	WA	141
IN	129	NM	150	WV	165
IA	128	NY	142	WI	162
KS	174	NC	156	WY	176

Source: America's Health Rankings (sourced in AARP)

Continued from Page 1

Once Armstrong was diagnosed with sleep apnea, PPD reached out to him on a regular basis to support and troubleshoot. PPD was also available via phone to discuss any issues at any time. PPD also pays critical attention to newly diagnosed drivers to help him/her adhere to therapy. PPD helps with pressure settings, mask fits, what to do in unique situations a driver may struggle with, and more.

"I have been extremely pleased with the driver support that I've received from PPD staff," he said. "PPD's level of support is a quality of professionalism that has helped keep me rolling, no matter where I am or where I'm headed. Drivers need that. PPD delivers."

From start to finish, from his sleep-study through to regular follow-up, PPD has been extremely positive and helpful, Armstrong said; especially when it came to his CPAP machine.

"That's breathing machine, that mask, it's no different than a pair of eyeglasses, orthopedic footwear, a knee brace," Armstrong said in his video interview. "These are all things people use ... to make their lives easier and better. The breathing mask, for me to have it on at night, it's no different. I have to accept that because that's my ticket to a good night sleep."

And how did his family react?

"At first, my family was a little leery of my CPAP machine," he said, "especially our cats who sat in studied silence while they listened intently to my breathing and the machine."

However, as his family witnessed how quickly Armstrong responded to the treatment, "they quickly became believers."

Today, Armstrong's treatment has turned his life around.

"Today, I am a better, safer driver who is more alert and focused," he said. "I have a lot more stamina and am able to now drive a full 11 hours without losing energy or alertness."

This is important for the 8-year Swift veteran who now mentors new drivers as well as delivers loads in the continental United States and Canada.

"Before I began my treatments, that would have been absolutely impossible," he said. "I'd have been stopping for rest after only three or four hours of driving."

And now he has something to say to other drivers debating testing and treatment for sleep apnea.

"Improve your health, your quality of life," he said. "Here's your chance to make a life-changing experience you will not regret."

To view Armstrong's full video interview, including footage of his sleep study, visit www.ppdsleep.com



Thin, active drivers at risk for sleep disorder, too

To look at Tom Zehmisch, you would never have thought of him to have sleep apnea.

But according to an article by Men's Health, the 46-year-old died suddenly of a heart attack while participating in a triathlon. He swam in a national meet only 4 months earlier.

You don't need to be obese to have problems with airway obstruction, according to Dr. Kevin Berry, a sleep apnea specialist in Denver.

Statistics from the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine claim between 18 million and 20 million Americans suffer from obstructive sleep apnea. Not all of them have been officially diagnosed and treated, and not all of them are overweight.

Dr. Kenneth Siegel sees patients all day and knows how to ask the right questions.

Do you snore? Do you have problems with daytime sleepiness? I instruct them to get a sleep study and sure

enough, they have sleep apnea. I'm amazed at how many people have this condition and don't even realize it, he said.

Because of the risk to all people – not just the obese – more doctors, dentists, and medical researchers are taking sleep apnea more seriously and aren't limiting the scope of their treatment and research.

In 2006, Dr. Eric Mair of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with researchers from Wilford Hall U.S. Air Force Medical Center, conducted a study on professional soldiers in the battlefield. The research concluded increased BMI from upper-body muscular hypertrophy, and large, muscular necks, can leave them gasping for air as they sleep.

So as a non-obese person, how can you know if you are at risk?

According to Berry, there are a lot of symptoms but it is ultimately up to the medical professionals to screen patients for sleep apnea.

SLEEP QUIZ

Circle all that apply.

Is your snore more than just noise?

I have been told that I snore, or snore loudly, every night, in all positions.

I have been told I stop breathing while I sleep.

I have jolted awake gasping for breath during the night

After a full night's sleep, I still wake up feeling tired.

I fall asleep at inappropriate times.

I have trouble concentrating.

I have become unusually forgetful.

I often wake up with a headache.

I have high blood pressure.

If you circled even one of the statements above, contact your company's program coordinator or call PPD to see if you qualify for a sleep screening.



Lack of zzzz's not responsible for tired feeling

Your brain – not just sleepiness – could be the cause of task difficulty during the day, according to a new study published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Research suggests mental difficulties may be due to oxygen deprivation based on the structure of the brain in a person who has sleep apnea.

Researchers studied 17 people with sleep apnea and 15 people without. They were able to determine a baseline of brain function with an MRI as each person did brain-function tests.

The study revealed OSA patients had much less gray matter in their brain. Also, the locations of the gray matter reductions were known to be necessary for problem-solving, reasoning, and even daytime sleepiness. OSA patients also scored worse on memory and attention functions.

However, after only three months using CPAP treatment, the OSA patients noticed increases in almost all cognitive functions.

Sleep contributes to creative thinking, better memory



Sleep is not just good for your body. New research suggests it helps improve memories and creative thinking.

A new study published in Current Directions in Psychological Science explain how catching those zzz's help solidify memories for retrieval at a later

time and help organize them, allowing for production of new ideas.

According to the research, the most common memories are emotional. If someone sees an image of something emotional, the image is largely forgotten after sleeping. However, after analyzing a sleeping brain, the researchers found parts of the brain associated with memory consolidation and emotion to be active.

A sleeping brain is actually working extremely hard to group memories, organize them, and understand which are most important. Researchers believe this function of the brain is what allows new, creative thinking in individuals. And when people miss sleep, it can significantly hamper cognitive abilities, although you they can still function through the day.



Cherry juice may put you in deep sleep

Cherry juice could make insomnia a condition of the past, according to a pilot study conducted by a team of University of Pennsylvania, University of Rochester and VA Center of Canandaigua researchers.

The study found cherry juice blend could have modest but beneficial effects on sleep in older adults with insomnia.

Researchers observed 15 participants who drank 8 ounces of a tart cherry juice drink in the morning and evening for two weeks. The subjects experienced significant reductions in insomnia, compared to before starting the study.

How? Russel J. Reiter, Ph.D, a biomedical scientist at the University of Texas Health Science

Center, says while melatonin supplement pills have been heavily promoted as a sleep aid, foods such as cherries (which are high in melatonin) may be a better alternative for boosting the body's own supply of melatonin. The body's natural but small production of melatonin plays a role in inducing sleep at night and awake during the day.