

Home Sleep Apnea Testing: Essential Information for Patients



What is sleep apnea?

Sleep apnea is a common sleep condition in which people may experience brief pauses in their breathing during sleep.¹

There are 2 main types of sleep apnea: central sleep apnea (CSA) and **obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)**. **OSA** is more common.¹



What is a home sleep apnea test (HSAT)?

An HSAT is a sleep study used to diagnose OSA. The test monitors your breathing patterns, airflow, oxygen levels, and heart rate while you sleep.²

An HSAT measures how many times you have pauses (apneas) in your breathing while you sleep. On average, having 5 or more of these pauses in 1 hour of sleep would mean that you have OSA.^{3,4}

What is an HSAT like?

At home, before going to sleep, you'll place small sensors on your body, usually around your chest, over a fingertip, or under your nose. These sensors are painless and shouldn't interfere with your sleep.⁵⁻⁷

How do I get an HSAT?

Step 1: talk to your doctor

Your doctor or healthcare professional will assess your sleep and evaluate risk of OSA. If necessary, your doctor may recommend a sleep study.⁶

Step 2: your doctor orders the test

Your primary care doctor can order a home sleep test (HSAT) to check for OSA. However, if you have certain health concerns, your doctor might suggest a sleep study in a clinic for a more detailed evaluation.^{5,6,8}

Step 3: the equipment is sent to you

The HSAT equipment will be provided to you with easy-to-follow instructions for setup and use. If you have any questions or need assistance, your doctor or the testing company is available to support you.^{3,5}

Step 4: you complete the test at home

On the night that you plan to take the HSAT, follow the instructions provided. If you feel that your sleep was different from usual, let your doctor know—the test may need to be repeated.^{5,6,9}

Step 5: return the equipment

Follow the provided instructions on how to return the HSAT equipment to the test company. Your results will be reviewed by sleep doctors for a diagnosis.⁶

Step 6: follow up with your doctor

Review your results with your doctor and talk about a treatment plan. If your test results show that you don't have OSA but your doctor still thinks that you do, they may recommend that you have an in-lab sleep study.^{3,5,6}

How do I get ready for my HSAT?

Before test day:



Discuss your medicines with your doctor. They may advise you to not use certain medicines before the test, as they might affect your results.^{7,9}

On test day:



Avoid caffeine and alcohol

because they may change your sleep patterns.^{7,9}



Shower but avoid hair products

like gels, oils, or sprays, which may interfere with the test sensors.^{7,9}



Follow your normal bedtime routine

as much as possible but try to shut off electronics 30-60 minutes before bed.^{7,9,10}

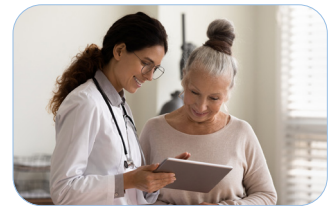


Avoid naps to make sure that you're tired enough to sleep that night.^{7,9}

Be sure to follow up with your doctor!

If you have OSA, it's important to start treatment as early as possible to prevent any negative health effects.⁴

After your HSAT, discuss your results with your doctor to decide on next steps.³⁻⁶



Is what I've heard about sleep studies true?

✗ MYTH

Sleep study tests are uncomfortable and painful.

✓ FACT

The sensors and wires may feel a bit odd but shouldn't hurt, and most people get used to them quickly.^{7,9}

✗ MYTH

HSAT results are often wrong.

✓ FACT

HSATs can help to accurately diagnose OSA. If your doctor feels that an HSAT may not be the best option for you, they may recommend an in-lab sleep test instead.^{5,6}

✗ MYTH

HSATs are hard to use.

✓ FACT

Most HSAT kits come with clear instructions and support options in case you have any questions.^{3,6,7,9}

✗ MYTH

Once I'm diagnosed with OSA, I'll be on a breathing machine for the rest of my life.

✓ FACT

Although continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy is a common and effective treatment for OSA, it's not the only option. Your doctor will work with you to find the best treatment for you.^{3,5,6}

1. Mayo Clinic. Accessed November 12, 2024. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sleep-apnea/symptoms-causes/syc-20377631>
2. Mayo Clinic. Accessed November 12, 2024. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sleep-apnea/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20377636>
3. Gottlieb DJ, Punjabi NM. *JAMA*. 2020;323(14):1389-1400. 4. Rosen IM, et al. *JCSM*. 2017;13(10):1205-1207. 5. Kapur VK, et al. *J Clin Sleep Med*. 2017;13(3):479-504. 6. Sleep Foundation. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-studies/at-home-sleep-study>
7. Cleveland Clinic. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diagnostics/12131-sleep-study-polysomnography> 8. Barnes N, Herbert L. *JNP*. 2023;19(7)104649. 9. Sleep Foundation. Accessed October 20, 2024. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-studies/how-to-prepare-for-a-sleep-study> 10. Sleep Foundation. Accessed October 25, 2024. <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene>