

Health Awareness

Sleep Better, Drive Safer

(NAPSA)—Learning more about obstructive sleep apnea could help you get a better night's sleep—and it might even save your life. Approximately 40 million Americans suffer from sleep apnea—when breathing stops for 10 or more seconds at a time during sleep. Despite the potentially deadly consequences, most sufferers are unaware they have a problem.

Studies show that the health consequences include increased chances of being involved in a serious car accident and contracting disease. People who suffer from sleep apnea have twice the risk of being in a car crash and a three to five times greater likelihood of being in a serious car crash involving personal injury, reveals a study by Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute and the University of British Columbia.

Sufferers also have a higher chance of stroke and heart attack, and the condition is said to be a root condition of diabetes, studies show.

"It's a deadly pandemic and severely underdiagnosed," says Dr. Mark Duncan, clinical director of the Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVI). "Who doesn't want to sleep better?"

Fortunately, the condition is treatable, and proper treatment can result in a 70 percent success rate.

A dental device is available to treat sleep apnea. Neuromuscular dentists from LVI are specially trained to fit this device. Used widely for early stages of sleep apnea, the device is called an orthotic, which is similar in appearance to a sports mouth guard. It moves the lower jaw for-



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ward and down slightly into an anatomically correct resting position, which keeps the airway open.

An orthotic offers the following benefits without surgery:

- Significant reduction in apneas for patients with mild-to-moderate apnea, particularly if patients sleep either on their backs or stomachs. The device may also improve airflow for some patients with severe apnea.

- Improvement and reduction in the frequency of snoring and loudness of snoring in most patients.

Orthotics have shown better long-term control of sleep apnea when compared to the standard surgical treatment. There are also fewer possible complications.

Be sure to choose a specially trained dentist who has both the training and computerized equipment to properly measure and find your optimal, at-rest natural jaw position—that's essential to building an effective orthotic.

To learn more, visit www.leadindentists.com.