



# Hopkins AWAKE Network Newsletter

## Help, my nose is giving me problems!

In the sleep center, we often hear complaints about problems with the nose or sinuses. These can include dripping or draining, congestion, infections or sneezing. These problems may be related to allergies, changes in weather or barometric pressure or other triggers. For patients who use a CPAP or other PAP machines, it is very important that the nasal passages be open and not congested in order to comfortably use the machine. Certain nose and sinus problems can be treated with simple measures such as nasal/sinus washes or nasal sprays. Some problems require more complex treatment including multiple medications or surgery.

Dr. Lisa Ishii will be our guest speaker in May. She is an Otolaryngologist at Johns Hopkins University who specializes in diseases of the nose and surgery to the nose. Please join her for a discussion of how issues with the nose that may affect sleep apnea treatment and the connections between nasal obstruction and sleep apnea.

## Sleep Disorders in the Media

Dr. David Neubauer from the Johns Hopkins Bayview Sleep Disorders Center was recently featured on the Diane Rehm Show on National Public Radio. The show discusses many sleep disorders, including sleep apnea. You can hear the broadcast by visiting their website [www.thedianerehmshow.org](http://www.thedianerehmshow.org) and searching for the program which aired on April 19th, 2010.

## Next Hopkins AWAKE Network meeting

Topic: Nose Obstruction and Sleep Apnea

Speakers: Lisa Ishii, MD

Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins Otolaryngology

Date & Time: Wednesday, May 26th at 6:30 pm

Location: Johns Hopkins at White Marsh—2nd floor conference room

4924 Campbell Blvd, Nottingham, MD 21236

JH at White Marsh is located across Honeygo Blvd from Ikea in White Marsh  
Parking is FREE. Conference Room is on the second floor (far west side).

May, 2010

Hopkins AWAKE group  
coordinator

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Join our email list!

Email [awake@jhmi.edu](mailto:awake@jhmi.edu)  
to join our email list.

You will receive this  
newsletter, announce-  
ments for upcoming  
AWAKE meetings and oc-  
casional emails with in-  
formation on sleep topics.

*Note changes to location, date and time*



# Medicare

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## **Background**

Over the past 3-4 years, there have been many changes in Medicare guidelines for sleep testing used to diagnose sleep apnea and reimbursement for PAP machines used to treat sleep apnea. If you have Medicare and have been on CPAP or other PAP therapy for a number of years, you may not be aware of these differences until you need to obtain replacement equipment. However, Medicare patients who have been diagnosed with sleep apnea in the past 2 years may notice more focus on their usage of the machine for insurance reimbursement purposes.

## **Sleep Testing**

Medicare now allows certain patients to undergo sleep testing in the home. These patients must meet certain criteria designed to insure that it is safe to undergo testing in the home and the results are likely to help determine if a patient has obstructive sleep apnea. Prior to undergoing any testing, Medicare requires a certain amount of medical information be known about a patient and documented in their medical record. This is designed to insure that the patient is undergoing the appropriate testing for their medical problems.

## **Sleep Therapy using a PAP machine (ex: CPAP machine)**

Patients may notice the biggest difference in the new Medicare guidelines as they pertain to their PAP machine. Prior to beginning to use the machine, Medicare requires the physician or other provider ordering the equipment to interview a patient, examine them, and provide certain information about them within the medical record. Once the patient receives their machine, follow-up is necessary to show that the patient is using their PAP machine in the recommended fashion and is finding benefit from the use of this machine. Within the first 90 days of receiving the machine, the patient must come in for an in-person clinic visit with a physician, Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant. At this visit, they must provide proof of their usage of the machine through reviewing data on the machine itself or a compliance card that comes with many machines. Medicare requires that a patient use their PAP machine for at least 4 hours for a minimum of 21 nights out of 30 consecutive nights within the first 90 day evaluation period in order to have this therapy paid for through Medicare. Proof of this usage is obtained by the medical equipment company who provides the machine to the patient for them to receive payment from Medicare for the machine and supplies.

## **What does this mean for me?**

If you have Medicare and have received a new PAP machine at home, you need to use this machine on a regular basis during the 90 day evaluation period after receiving a machine. If you are not able to use your machine for more than 4 hours on a nightly basis, you should be calling the physician or other provider who ordered the machine to discuss the reasons why you are unable to use the machine. If you are using the machine for more than 4 hours a night on a nightly basis, then make your appointment to come in for an in-person appointment to verify this usage. This appointment must be done within the first 90 days after you receive the machine. Since Medicare requires documentation of at least 30 days of usage, you cannot have this appointment until after the 30th day since you received the machine at home.

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