

TESTIMONIALS

Dancing with Death

Author: James Foster Robinson

Published on January 10, 2004 at www.suite101.com

Every night when I fell asleep I danced with Death! Every time I dozed off or took a nap, I danced with Death. I have Severe Obstructive Sleep Apnea. I stop breathing in my sleep over one hundred times an hour. There was the distinct possibility that I could have died innumerable times in my sleep. The condition is incurable, at least in my case. But there is effective treatment. My Sleep Apnea Specialist has prescribed the CPAP machine for whenever I sleep. Using this wonderful machine has saved my life. I can sleep now without fearing that I will stop breathing!

How did I come to this - relying on a machine to literally keep me alive while I sleep? The story begins in my childhood in a sandbox.

Another child took my metal toy shovel and I demanded it back. He gave it back all right and severed my nose with it. The family doctor sewed it back on but it was to trouble me for the rest of my life. By the time I was in my fifties, I had had three operations on it to clean it up inside so I could breathe. That, combined with heavy drinking until I was forty, did a number on my throat. As I grew up, I developed a reputation as a prolific snorer. Family members claimed that I rattled the glass panes in the windows. They even taped me one night to prove it to me. Well, life goes on and I kept on snoring loudly.

It was my second wife, Maureen, who alerted me to how bad my snoring and breathing was getting. She became worried when I progressed from snoring to gagging and gasping for breath in my sleep. I developed a bad case of heartburn and had to make frequent trips to the bathroom. My health deteriorated, as I was not getting enough sleep. While stopped at red lights I would fall asleep at the wheel of my car, only to wake up in seconds gasping for breath. At work I would doze off at my desk with the same results. I became

chronically tired and cranky. In short I was a mess. My life was falling apart.

Maureen came to my rescue. Having heard of Sleep Apnea, she researched it on the Internet. There she found a checklist of symptoms. I had them all! Time to see the Doctor!

Within a short while, I was at the University of British Columbia Hospital Sleep Lab. They wired me up and told me to go to sleep. Right! With all those wires attached to me? Surprisingly I did fall asleep but after two hours they woke me and said that I definitely had Sleep Apnea. In that two hours I had over one hundred apnea episodes. I had stopped breathing more than once every minute. Of course I did not realize it as I would start to wake up when my breathing stopped and start to breathe again, fall back to sleep, stop breathing, start to gag, wake up, start to breathe and so on. No wonder I was tired all the time!

They had me go back to sleep again still wired up just to get more data. But the verdict was in! I was to see the Sleep Specialist first thing in the morning.

The Sleep Specialist explained that I had Severe Obstructive Sleep Apnea where my throat collapses when I sleep. In view of my previous surgeries and history of previous alcohol abuse, he felt that the CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) Machine was best for me. It would keep my air passages open while I sleep. Well, I got the machine and it changed my life, but not until after a struggle to accept it. That is a whole other story which I will relate in a future article.

But now I had a new sleeping partner, which meant that I no longer had to sleep dance with death!

Mr. James Robinson has been a patient of Clinical Sleep Solutions since 2000. Mr. Robinson hosts an on-line publishing community called Suite101.com in the category of "Sleep Disorders", "Professional Security" and "Liechtenstein."

My CPAP Experience, by Irwin Cohen

I have been a snorer for years and years, and I thought it was a normal condition, especially as one got older. Two years ago, my doctor recommended a nasal spray which was supposed to relieve my nasal congestion. This was not too successful. Then we tried a different nasal spray. This also was not successful.

I never had a blood pressure problem until recently when my doctor noticed that my pressure was fluctuating for no known reason. He was certain that I was suffering from sleep apnea because of my low energy levels, daytime fatigue, and a sudden increase in blood pressure.

An oximetry test proved that I was not getting enough oxygen during sleep because my airway obstructs and prevents air from going into my lungs. My doctor explained that lack

of oxygen during sleep could damage my heart.

To be sure I didn't have a lung problem, I was sent for a Pulmonary Lung Function Test and the results were normal. After that, he suggested a trial of CPAP. Initially, I was terrified by the idea of wearing a mask nightly.

I entered the office of Clinical Sleep Solutions with fear. However, as the apparatus was shown to me and its use explained to me in a very professional manner, it allayed all my fears. Surprisingly, after several nights, I quickly adjusted to the mask and the pressure. Two months ago, I began at a CPAP pressure of 6 cmH₂O, now I feel very comfortable at a pressure of 12 cmH₂O. The change in my sleep pattern is quite incredible. Besides the fact that I no longer snore, I feel more refreshed and more energetic, after a very peaceful sleep.

