

Welcome

I know you're curious and still trying to make a decision. That is as it should be. Let me answer some questions that will help you make some critical decisions.

What happens when I get to your office?

We'll start by having a conversation. I want you to share with me the scope of your problem. By the time you get here, you will have received a questionnaire or two to help me understand much about how your life and physical status is impacting you. It is important that you be completely honest. All your information will be held in the strictest confidence. Remember, my goal is to not only improve your sleep disordered breathing, but to make your life better overall. If you have already had a sleep study, please be sure to bring a copy with you. If you haven't had one, you will be asked to get one. The reason is that the sleep study will quantify the level of the disturbance. In that way follow-ups can be compared to original values. I understand your concerns about giving up a night sleep to be in a sleep center, but it is the only way to get such complete information. The cost of our initial consultation is \$250 which will be payable at your visit. We accept all major credit cards as well as your check and cash.

What happens next?

We are going to gather some additional info. One of the tests we are going to do is known as a heart rate variability test. It's a very simple test. A belt with a couple of electrode pickups built into it is placed just below your chest. It is a measure of cardiac efficiency, overall health and also provides us with a picture autonomic nervous system function, both sympathetic and parasympathetic. You will start by lying comfortably in our dental chair. No snickering there, I know some of you are not comfortable in the dental chair, but remember, we're not doing any of that stuff. Then you will be asked to stand.

Now, that's not too difficult, right?

So what's this autonomic stuff?

Allow me to explain. Our bodies function to a large extent without our knowing or need to control. For instance, we don't have to tell our heart to beat, nor do we have to instruct our stomach and intestines to move food along toward its final exit. That's what I mean by autonomic. There are two types of control in the autonomic

system. The first is the sympathetic nervous system. This provides us with the ability to respond instantaneously to a threat. The second, the parasympathetic nervous system provides an opposite effect, to return us to a lower level of vigilance. If a patient has an elevated sympathetic tone, he or she is more likely to experience a greater effect from the release of adrenalin aka epinephrine that results from the decrease in blood oxygen, a result of your breathing disorder. Of course, this is a rather simplistic explanation. However, you can see that if a person is not in balance, the body's ability to survive is compromised. If you are interested in finding out more, the good 'ol web is rich with information on this topic.

A lateral head x-ray, known as a cephalometric radiograph is taken to assist in the selection of appliances. It shows the position of the tongue and it's relation to the airway opening. It also shows me the position and elevation of the hyoid bone. It is this bone which clues me into the muscle activity of the tongue and what can be done to use it to improve the size of the airway diameter, which will ultimately allow more air to pass to the lungs. Remember that this is the goal.

Impressions of your upper and lower teeth. Don't worry if you feel you are a gagger. We have ways of getting you through that. I've been taking impressions for over 30 years. Your appliances will be designed for your comfort as well as the needed effect.

Is there an additional charge for this visit?

Yes, this part of treatment is \$800. However, when you go ahead with your appliance therapy, this amount will be credited toward that cost. Yes, the full amount, so it's like getting the diagnostic tests for free. We have to do this because of the time involved to acquire diagnostic information which is critical for us to make the proper evaluation. Additional impressions may be taken depending on the range of appliance therapy needed.

These are the key issues. You will be notified of the type and final design of your appliances and their cost before proceeding further.

All our appliances include four months of adjustments. After that, there is an additional charge of \$250 - \$600 based on time and corrections needed. Adjustments are sometimes necessary to adjust to changing muscle tone in the tongue and for any dental work that may take place after the appliances are delivered. The initial four months free adjustments does not include adjustments necessary because of subsequent dental work which alters the precise size and shape of the teeth upon

which the appliances were made. Therefore it is important to have any needed dental work completed before we take the final impressions for your appliances. I would be happy to be in contact with your dentist about this.

I hope this explanation gives you a better idea of the process and it's rationale. I understand that any type of treatment can be a bit scary, but remember, this is a non-invasive process. What I need from you is your commitment to your improved health. I can't do this without you. If you are intent in running your body into the ground, literally, I am not what you are looking for.

One more thing

Your physician is integral to this process and will monitor you as usual for appropriate types and levels of medication. As you improve these may require dosage reduction and hopefully elimination. Do not make this decision on your own. It would be unwise and unsafe to alter your medications on your own.