

Sleep Apnoea

Why Do We Ask?

Sleep apnoea is a common condition involving heavy snoring and periods where the patient stops breathing for several seconds at a time.

People with uncontrolled sleep apnoea are more likely to develop glaucoma, even in the absence of high pressures in their eyes.

This is because sleep apnoea affects the delivery of oxygen to sensitive areas in the brain, and these include the optic nerve: the “scene of the crime” in glaucoma. An optic nerve starved of nutrients and oxygen is an optic nerve with glaucoma.

If you (or your bedmate) suspect you may have sleep apnoea, it's important to have it checked out. Ask your GP to recommend a reputable clinic.

The other link eyes have to sleep apnoea is a weird one: sometimes we see that patients have “floppy eyelid syndrome” (and yes that's the real term). When we hold their lower eyelids down to examine the lower eyeball (or put contact lenses in), the lower lid takes a while to bounce back. Floppy Eyelid Syndrome and sleep apnoea are often seen together.

