

Forest & Bluff

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“A patient’s wife thanked me and hugged me.”

Breathing Made Easy

TEXT BY ELAINE SLAYTON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIAN BRIGGS

“Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) alone may afflict an estimated 17% of Americans and is expected to approach 20% in the next few years due to the obesity epidemic.”

Snores is rarely endearing, often annoying and sometimes life threatening for people affected with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).

If you have a family member, loved one or friend who snores regularly – read on. There is hope, not only to stop the snoring but to potentially extend and even save a life. Dr. Philip V. Goduco, DDS, MAGD, is among a growing but limited number of dentists trained and qualified to treat snoring and sleep apnea, and he is making it a priority in his dental practice. Snoring is the first and early sign of sleep-disordered breathing that partially obstructs breathing during sleep and affects as many as 30 million (nearly 1 out of every 8 individuals). While snoring can be harmless, it can also be the sign of a more serious medical condition known as obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). Sleep apnea occurs when the tongue and soft tissue fall back into the throat during sleep, completely blocking the airway. It is associated with increased risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure, automobile accidents, depression, and exces-

sive daytime sleepiness.

Until recently, people diagnosed with sleep apnea have been treated with a medical device, known as a CPAP, which delivers continuous positive airway pressure therapy by way of a facemask worn at night. Unfortunately, many people cannot or do not use the CPAP effectively. Patients often experience claustrophobia with the facemask, as was the case with Reggie White, defensive end for the Philadelphia Eagles and Green Bay Packers. Sadly, sleep apnea was ruled a factor in his recent death at the age of 43. Other patients simply stop wearing the facemask, which is connected to a machine about the size of a cable box, due to its nuisance and inconvenience.

But now, according to updated guidelines from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, snoring and mild-to-moderate obstructive sleep apnea can be effectively treated with an oral appliance similar in appearance to an orthodontic retainer or a sports mouth guard that is worn at night. After helping a man overcome his snoring, Dr. Goduco recalls, "A patient's wife

thanked me and hugged me." And, Dr. Goduco warns that sleep apnea is on the rise in this country, "Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) alone may afflict an estimated 17% of Americans and is expected to approach 20% in the next few years due to the obesity epidemic."

"I want to help people breathe," Dr. Goduco sums up. Since opening his practice in 1992, Dr. Goduco has offered comprehensive dental care including orthodontics, TMJ, snoring and obstructive sleep apnea, prosthetic tooth replacement as well as restorative, cosmetic and gum therapy. Dr. Goduco is a member of the Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine, the Dental Organization for Sleep Apnea, and an affiliate member of the Sleep Medicine Network based in Portland, Oregon. He works closely with a network of physicians, specialists and private care physicians to provide the best care for his patients.

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