You’ve decided to add sleep dentistry as a segment of your practice services - here are the basics to ensure success in treating obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) patients.
INTRODUCTION & CHECKLIST

DENTAL SLEEP TRAINING & EDUCATION

DIAGNOSING PATIENTS: TREATMENT PROCESS

MEDICAL INSURANCE BILLING

CONCLUSION
As the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) advances to include a broader range of therapeutic options, the role of the dentist has become more central. The use of oral devices to treat OSA puts the dentist on the frontlines of this public health issue.

You are in a very unique position to help identify and treat millions of OSA patients left undiagnosed or that are simply unhappy with CPAP therapy. At SomnoMed, the patient is the center of our focus and we know that successful treatment is much more than just the device. With our history of innovation, commitment to connecting physicians and dentists, SomnoMed provides patients with the products and services they need to return to enjoying their lives. As the global leader in COAT™ (Continuous Open Airway Therapy), SomnoMed provides clinically proven diagnostic and treatment options for obstructive sleep apnea (OSA).
Considering that each dental professional has annual dental continuing education requirements, training and education focused on obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) treatment is a first step in growing your dental sleep practice. With more patients being diagnosed with sleep apnea and COAT™ (Continuous Open Airway Therapy) emerging as a key treatment, a background in the management of sleep-disordered breathing allows dental professionals to provide much needed care to patients and grow their practices.

For patients who fail or decline CPAP therapy, as well as patients with mild-to-moderate obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), oral appliances like SomnoDent devices are indicated for use.

What would you tell a dentist who is considering getting started with sleep?

“Get trained properly. There are still dentists who believe that [sleep dentistry] is ‘just making a piece of plastic.’ Keep learning…
- Dr. Erin Elliott, DDS

SomnoMed offers Level 1 Dental Sleep Education online training modules for a convenient and simple way to continue education in dental sleep medicine—and take advantage of the growing opportunities in the field. SomnoMed’s Level 1 program allows dentists to earn 6 CE’s toward their dental continuing education requirements and will equip dentists and dental staff with an overview of sleep disorders and sleep disordered breathing, steps to establishing a referral source for your patients, medical billing options and solutions, and more.
POTENTIAL OSA PATIENTS MAY REACH YOUR OFFICE IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS, SUCH AS:

1. An OSA patient has been or was using CPAP and a friend told them about a SomnoDent oral device to treat their sleep apnea.

2. A physician has referred them to your practice for COAT after having a sleep study and was diagnosed with OSA.

   Note: It is critical to stay in contact with the physician regarding the patient’s progress after treatment. Physicians look for clinical partners who communicate well and work collaboratively throughout the treatment process, especially ensuring that the patient will follow up with the physician after the dental titration has been completed.

   • Ensure the patient follows up with the referring physician after they are fitted with their device.
   • Document your cases to share pre and post treatment results, based on patient AHI, with physician partner

3. A patient is in for a dental procedure and mentions that they are experiencing signs or symptoms of sleep apnea. They may have also contacted their physician to have their symptoms further evaluated.

Connecting With Physicians

When looking for a partner in treating patients, physicians are generally looking for three things:

A dental partner who demonstrates a high level of commitment to the field with ongoing training and knowledge about sleep medicine.

A clinician who communicates well and collaboratively throughout the treatment process, especially ensuring that the patient will follow up with the physician after the dental titration has been completed.

Dentists who accept medical insurance, and, preferably, are in-network with the same insurance plans as the physicians.

Read more on connecting with physicians here.
DIAGNOSING PATIENTS
THE TREATMENT PROCESS

1 in 5 of your patients have sleep apnea and may be undiagnosed, it is important for your dental practice staff to be trained in dental sleep medicine and actively screen patients.

TO BEGIN SCREENING FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

Steps for Front Desk Staff:
• Ask new and current patients to take the Epworth Sleepiness Survey and/or STOP BANG Screening assessment.
• Score the questionnaire and alert hygienist prior to the patient coming back for appointment.

Steps for Hygienist:
• Discuss OSA for patients whose screening results place them at a high OSA risk:
  • Answering yes to three or more items on the STOP BANG Screening indicates a high risk of OSA.
  • Scoring 10+ on the Epworth Survey indicates excessive sleepiness. The patient may want to consider seeking medical attention.
• Proceed with an anatomical screening - physical traits in the oral cavity contributing to OSA diagnosis:
  • Over-sized tongue
  • Vaulted narrow palate
  • Scalloped tongue
  • Deep overbite
  • Eroded teeth/acid reflux
  • “Turkey Waddle” below chin
  • Mouth-breathing
  • Airway/Tonsils

Screening Your Patients for Sleep Apnea
Access SomnoMed’s interactive sleep screening tools and have patients fill out prior to their appointment, utilize in your dental sleep marketing, or have a staff member or hygienist implement during assessments:

Click HERE to access the STOP Bang Screening or Epworth Sleepiness Survey

© 2015 SomnoMed
THE SLEEP STUDY

A sleep study is needed to diagnose a patient with OSA and, a diagnosis is required in order for medical insurance to cover the cost of treatment. A sleep study is a safe, painless and simple evaluation of how your patient’s body functions during sleep. The clinical term for a sleep study is polysomnography (PSG) and can be performed at a sleep laboratory or via a home sleep test depending on your state regulations.

SomnoMed and the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSM) urges all dentists to follow state licensing laws. View the AADSM “Policy Statement on the Diagnosis and Treatment of OSA” here.

NAVIGATING THE SLEEP STUDY PROCESS

A sleep study partner, either facility or home-based, will provide a medical diagnostic service to your dental patient for treatable obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) within your dental practice. An ideal sleep study partner should work alongside you, the dentist, and the patient’s primary care physician to ensure comprehensive care – further enhancing your relationships with referring physicians. In addition, your partner will also provide complete medical reporting back to your dental practice and the patient’s referring physician, which is required for medical reimbursement.

Once the results of the sleep study are returned, they must be interpreted by a board certified sleep physician in your state and, depending on the severity of their sleep apnea, directed to proper treatment (COAT or CPAP). Once the OSA diagnosis has been made and the patient has been prescribed COAT, you then fit the patient with a SomnoDent oral device, which is billable to the patient’s medical insurance. The reimbursement for oral devices is typically in the $2,000 - $3,000 range; which is a significant opportunity to gain revenue for your practice.

If you have any questions on finding a lab or home sleep testing partner please feel free to contact us at:
1-888-447-6673 opt. 4 or ussales@somnomed.com
Implementing some simple, tried and true strategies can certainly help your patients say “yes” to treatment and help your practice to become more referral friendly at the same time. Most dental practices find that it’s easier to outsource medical billing to a third party billing company or to train an internal staff member on medical billing. We’ll explore those options in this section.

Potential OSA patients may reach your office in many different ways, such as:
- A patient has been or was using a CPAP and a friend told them about a SomnoDent oral device to treat their sleep apnea;
- A physician has referred them to your practice for COAT after having a sleep study. (Note: it is critical to stay in contact with the physician regarding the patient’s progress after treatment);
- A patient is in for a dental procedure and mentions experiencing signs or symptoms of sleep apnea and decides to contact their physician to have their symptoms further evaluated.

For the scenarios listed above, you will need to be aware of the following steps:

1. Verify patient medical insurance
   - Conduct a patient insurance benefit check and per-authorization by either office or third party billing service
   - Most COAT devices are covered by medical insurance and/or Medicare

2. Take impressions for a SomnoDent oral device
   - How to: Impressions, Bite Registration & George Gauge Utilization
     - How to Properly Take an Impression
     - SomnoMed How to Guide: Impressions and Bite Registrations
     - George Gauge Instructions

3. Deliver the SomnoDent to the patient and submit the claim to medical insurance provider

4. Receive reimbursement

Once dental practices educate themselves on verifying medical benefits, the amount of out of pocket expenses to the patient are minimized. The dental office team can learn to do successfully submit claims themselves by using skilled coaches or they can outsource dental sleep medicine verification of medical insurance and medical billing. It is recommended that the team develop a checklist and protocols for medical billing.

To find a Third Party Medical Billing Partner, click [here](#).
The goal of this guide is to provide a brief overview in growing your dental sleep practice. Thousands of dental professionals have successfully integrated sleep into their practice. Should you need assistance or additional information as you treat more patients with OSA, please let us know, we’re here to help!

**TURN THIS EBOOK INTO ACTUAL RESULTS FOR YOUR PRACTICE**

SomnoMed continues to advance treatment options in COAT™ (Continuous Open Airway Therapy) and we want to be your partner in providing the best in patient care and compliance.

Give us a call to speak with a SomnoDent account representative. We want to learn all about you, your challenges and aspirations in the growing industry of dental sleep.

**TALK TO US TODAY**

888-447-6673
ussales@somnomed.com

© 2015 SomnoMed
Long term reliable partners are difficult to find. I feel with SomnoMed I share a common vision and work-ethic. SomnoMed has been a tried and trustworthy partner with my practice for many years. They continue to work closely with me in growth through industry relationships, education, and practice development resources. Not to mention their industry-leading line-up of sleep devices.
- Dr. Srujal Shah, DDS, DABDSM