

Chestnut Dental Associates Highlights Sleep Apnea Detection During Better Sleep Month

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NEEDHAM, MA - May 13, 2026 -
Chestnut Dental Associates, P.C. is raising awareness about the critical role dental professionals play in identifying signs of sleep-disordered breathing as part of Better Sleep Month this May. The Massachusetts-based practice emphasizes that dentists can be valuable partners in recognizing potential sleep apnea indicators during routine dental examinations.

Better Sleep Month, observed annually in May by the Better Sleep Council, focuses national attention on the importance of quality sleep for overall health. The timing provides an opportunity to address widespread misconceptions about sleep disorders, particularly the belief that sleep apnea diagnosis and treatment fall exclusively within medical specialists' domain.

"Dentists see anatomical structures and wear patterns that directly correlate with sleep-disordered breathing," said Anne Hertzberg, D.M.D., from the Chestnut Dental Office. "During regular checkups, we observe signs like enamel erosion from nighttime grinding, jaw muscle tension, and airway characteristics that suggest

potential breathing disruptions during sleep. These observations allow us to initiate important conversations about sleep health and recommend appropriate evaluation."

Sleep apnea affects an estimated 22 million Americans, according to the American Sleep Apnea Association, with approximately 80 percent of moderate and severe cases remaining undiagnosed. The condition, characterized by repeated interruptions in breathing during sleep, can lead to serious health complications including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cognitive impairment when left untreated.

Dental professionals are uniquely positioned to observe early warning signs of sleep-disordered breathing during routine examinations. Common oral indicators include worn tooth surfaces from grinding, scalloped tongue edges, enlarged tonsils, and specific jaw positioning patterns. These physical manifestations often appear before patients seek medical evaluation for sleep concerns.

The integration of sleep health awareness into dental practice represents an evolution in comprehensive patient care. While dentists do not diagnose sleep apnea independently, their observations can prompt referrals for sleep studies and collaboration with sleep medicine physicians. For confirmed cases, dental professionals may provide oral appliance therapy as part of a coordinated Sleep Apnea treatement plan.

The dental community's involvement in sleep health screening addresses a significant gap in healthcare delivery. Many individuals visit their dentist more frequently than their primary care physician, creating regular opportunities for observation and early intervention. This accessibility makes dental practices valuable frontline resources for identifying potential sleep disorders.

Chestnut Dental maintains a multidisciplinary approach to patient care, with specialists across various dental fields who understand the interconnection between oral health and systemic conditions. The practice's educational efforts extend to digital platforms, with Chestnut Dental on YouTube featuring informational content about various dental health topics, including the relationship between oral health and overall wellness.

Chestnut Dental Associates has served Massachusetts families since 1970, operating three locations in Needham, Franklin, and Bedford. The practice is known for coordinated care across pediatric, orthodontic, and adult dental specialties. Many of its doctors are trained at or maintain affiliations with Harvard School of Dental Medicine and Boston Children's Hospital.

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CHESTNUT DENTAL ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Chestnut Dental provides Pediatric, Orthodontic, and Adult Cosmetic Dentistry in a family-friendly setting. Evening, Saturday, and emergency care are available. Board-certified pediatric specialists and Invisalign or traditional braces for all ages.

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