



Important Things to Know About Sleep Studies

- A sleep study is done to look at your sleep. Your doctor will be able to work out if you have a sleep problem and, if so, what it is
- The sleep study can be done either at home or by staying overnight in a sleep clinic
- Together, you and your doctor will decide where the sleep study should be done
- It lasts one night. During this time you will wear leads to record information on how you sleep
- If you think that you need to do a sleep study, talk to your GP about a referral

What is a sleep study?

A sleep study is a medical test. Sleep is monitored to assist with the diagnosis of sleep problems. It may be done in the home or by staying overnight in a specialised sleep clinic, whichever is best for you.

What happens in a sleep study that is done in the sleep clinic?

Patients usually arrive in the early evening and go home on waking up in the morning. Trained scientists at the clinic will record signals from the brain and monitor breathing and oxygen levels in the blood. They will attach leads to do this. Most clinics will also record heart rate, leg movements, sleeping position and snoring.

What does a home sleep study involve?

A number of hospitals and private clinics offer home sleep studies. Patients go to the clinic during the day and have monitoring leads attached. These leads are almost the same as those which are used for a study done overnight in the clinic. But patients can walk around and sleep in their own beds.

Which kind of study is the best?

A sleep clinic is a carefully controlled environment. The results from a study here will be the best they can be. The staff will constantly watch all the signals collected. However being in an unfamiliar environment can be difficult for some patients. For these people, the information from a home sleep study will be better than if they had to stay overnight in a sleep clinic. Both methods have their place and you should discuss this with your doctor.

What does the sleep study tell your doctor?

The signals from the brain show when you are asleep and when you wake up from sleep. The breathing signals and oxygen levels give information about breathing during sleep. Some patients have stop-start breathing during the night, a disorder called sleep apnoea. The leg leads show if there is any movement or twitching, which may disturb sleep. A sleep study can also pick up other rarer sleep problems.

What are the risks of a sleep study?

Using creams, small leads are attached to your head and your body. In some people the cream may cause temporary skin irritation, but nothing done in a sleep study will hurt.

How do I know if I need a sleep study?

If you are worried about your sleep or think that you may have a sleep problem, you should see your GP. Often, your GP can treat the problem. If not, you can be referred to a [sleep specialist](#). This is the best person to work out if you need a sleep study. Having a sleep study without seeing a doctor is not the best way to do it. The wrong information may be collected and your sleep may not be helped. A sleep problem is a serious issue. It needs to be dealt with properly.

What do I need to do to get ready for my sleep study?

The sleep study clinic will give you information about what you need to do and bring to your study. Usually, there are no special things that you need to do before your study - you should try and do exactly what you do on a normal day.

How much will a sleep study cost?

This is very variable. You should check with the clinic before you book the sleep study.

Where can I find out more?

A sleep services directory for Australia is available at <http://www.sleep.org.au/information/sleep-services-directory>

More information about such studies is available at a number of web sites including <http://www.talkaboutslepp.com/sleep-basics/viewasleepstudy.htm>

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A voluntary group offering assistance and support to people and their families living with sleep disorders

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The peak national association of clinicians and scientists devoted to investigation of sleep and its disorders

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Ongoing concerns about sleep or other medical conditions should be discussed with your local doctor.

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