

# Fat in blood could be linked to obstructive sleep apnea

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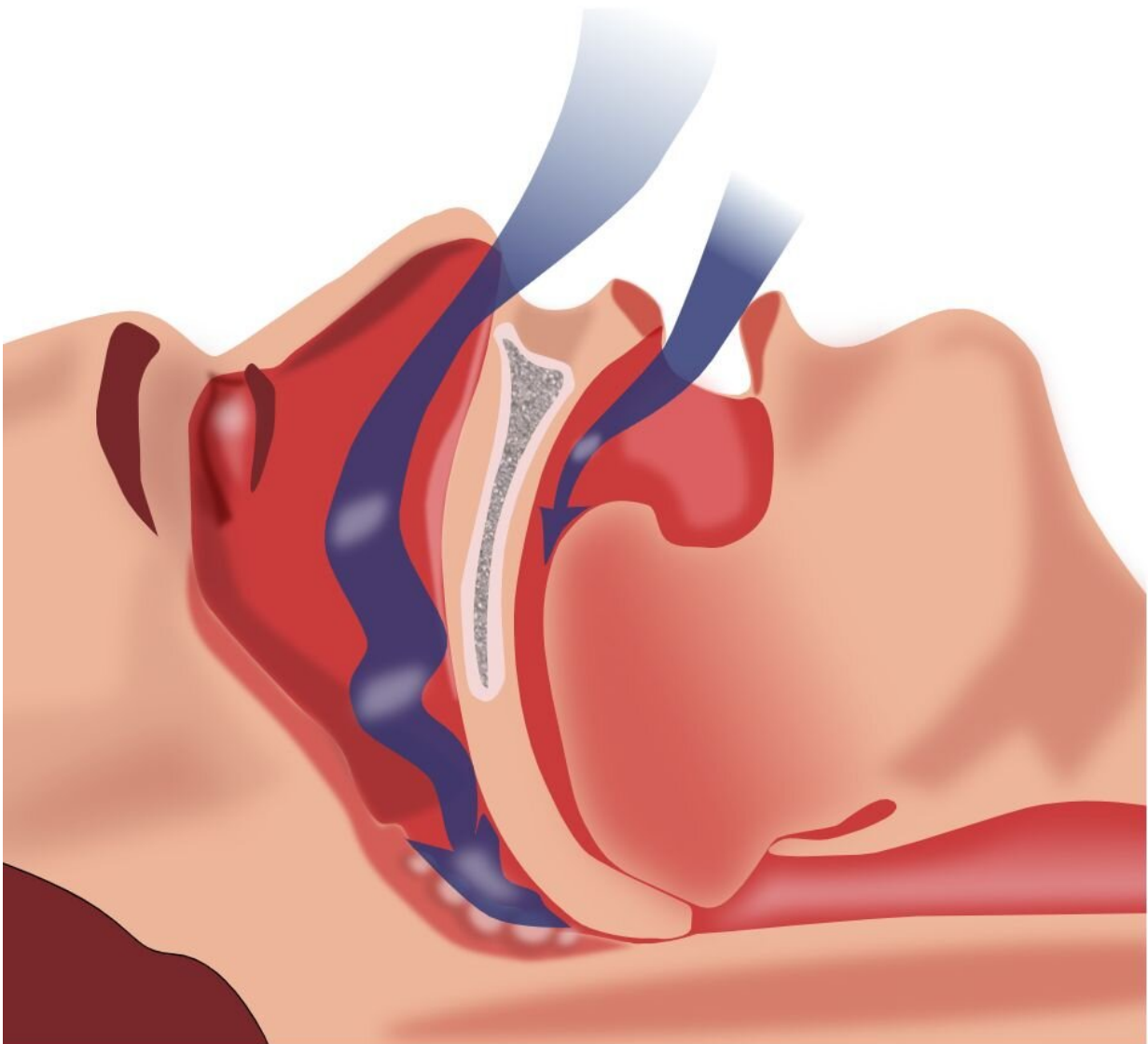


Illustration of obstruction of ventilation. Credit: Habib M'henni / public domain

New research by the Freemason's Centre for Male Health and Wellbeing (FCMHW) at SAHMRI has found a potential link between obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and a type of fat found in the blood known as triglycerides. OSA is a condition where the airway closes off during sleep and so the lungs cannot oxygenate the blood adequately.

The [study](#), led by FCMHW Director and University of Adelaide Professor of Medicine, Professor Gary Wittert, showed that participants with more severe OSA and reductions in blood oxygen concentrations were more likely to have elevated concentrations of [triglycerides](#) in the blood,

"Obstructive sleep apnea increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, stroke, cardiovascular conditions, and depression" Prof Wittert said.

"The results of this study are concerning because the most striking effects were seen in people who were not overweight. OSA is common and does occur in lean people but rarely recognized until the individual's health is severely impaired."

Participants were drawn from the Men Androgens Inflammation Lifestyle Environment and Stress Study (MAILES), a comprehensive assessment of the health of Australian men aged 40 and over.

Of the 753 people involved, half were shown to have moderate to severe OSA, with 75% of men aged 40 or over having some form of the syndrome.

"The key message from this study is that testing for OSA should be considered even in lean men with elevated [blood](#) triglycerides concentrations," Prof Wittert said.

Researchers believe continuous positive airway pressure therapy (CPAP)

delivered via machine overnight may be beneficial in reducing concentrations of triglycerides and the symptoms of OSA.

Professor Wittert says further studies are needed to evaluate the relationship between OSA and triglycerides in women and young men and assess the effectiveness of CPAP treatment for these groups.

**More information:** Layla B Guscoth et al, The Association of Obstructive Sleep Apnea and Nocturnal Hypoxemia with Lipid Profiles in a Population-Based Study of Community-Dwelling Australian Men, *Nature and Science of Sleep* (2021). [DOI: 10.2147/NSS.S327478](https://doi.org/10.2147/NSS.S327478)

Provided by South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)

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