



## **Get Your Beauty Sleep**

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One of the things that people have heard through time is that sleep should be an essential part of your beauty routine. We sleep so that the neurotransmitters in our brain can be redistributed appropriately, we sleep because our body needs to repair tissue damaged through the activities of the day, and we sleep because our brain needs the downtime to consolidate new information acquired during the day. Do we really sleep to look better physically? Or, does lack of sleep create a meaningful change in our appearance?

Through the years, I have taken a major role in helping people adjust to positive airway pressure treatment for their obstructive sleep apnea. If you haven't seen a PAP mask or machine, it involves a mask, connected to a hose which is connected to an air pressure device- sometimes called the "blower" in the industry. Approximately 50% of people struggle to take their medications as prescribed, and medication adherence is significantly easier than PAP adherence. To wear a PAP, you have to put up with wearing a mask that is strapped to your face, and proceeding to sleep while that mask delivers pressure. The challenge to finding a way to adjust to this treatment often lies in their motivation and the symptoms that drove them to get treated. The best predictor of adherence to PAP is subjective sleepiness prior to treatment; if the person was sleepy beforehand, they will likely feel pretty enthusiastic about their treatment. We get rooted in the reasons why treatment is important, and then we work toward recognizing that adherence is related to symptom relief. My "big guns" drive to help is the fact that quality sleep can affect the brain's perception of appetite- we crave more food (sugary food) when we are sleep deprived, and these cravings can be reduced by improvements in sleep. We may not prioritize sleep for focus, but we certainly can make it a priority if it means we might be able to fit into our skinny jeans. This is the argument for "beauty sleep" that I have made in the past.

The most recent Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine published an article looking at ratings of attractiveness in people pre and post treatment for obstructive sleep apnea. The study used two modalities to rate attractiveness: subjective observer ratings and objective 3-dimensional digital photogrammetry. Volunteers were masked as to when pictures were pre or post treatment, and were asked to rate which pictures in which subjects appeared more alert, more youthful, and more attractive. Photogrammetry measured for forehead surface volume and eye and cheek redness. The researchers concluded that patients with obstructive sleep apnea are perceived as being more alert, more youthful, and more attractive after adherent use of PAP pressure. Objective changes in facial appearance were measured with photogrammetry, and

participants reported improvements in daytime alertness. These changes were consistent with the improvements in sleep that are anticipated with treatment of obstructive apnea.

So, that means that the reasons why we need to sleep well have expanded beyond cognitive performance, emotional stability, physical health, immune response, and better appetite regulation We need our beauty sleep.

Chervin RD; Ruzicka DL; Vahabzadeh A; Burns MC; Burns JW; Buchman SR. The face of sleepiness: improvement in appearance after treatment of sleep apnea. *J Clin Sleep Med* 2013;9(9):845-852.