

Monett resident Leroy Earll says wearing a CPAP machine took getting used to, but now he feels “better than ever.”



Good health from A to ZZZZZZZ's

by Janell Patton

Getting enough ZZZ's comes naturally to most of us, but for some it's a nightly struggle that leaves them feeling restless, irritable and generally unhealthy. Unfortunately many of those individuals who have problems getting a good night's rest don't realize they might be suffering from a treatable [sleep disorder](#).

Take Leroy Earll. He would wake up in the morning still feeling tired, and would often fall asleep during the day. He finally voiced his concerns during a check-up with his heart specialist. “It came to the point where I used to have to force myself to get up, and then once I was up I didn't feel like I had any energy to do anything,” he explains. “I thought I was sleeping all night, except when my wife would wake me up because I was snoring, so I didn't know what the problem was.”

Earll was immediately scheduled for a sleep study at Cox Monett Hospital. He reported to the Cox Monett Sleep Study Lab just before

his regular bedtime for an overnight polysomnography (sleep study) test. The technologist attached electrodes to various points on his head, face, body and legs. While he was sleeping the test measured his brain wave activity, eye movement, skeletal muscle activity, airflow at the mouth and nose, and respiratory effort. But after only an hour the sleep technologist woke him up and told him he needed to put

on a [CPAP](#) (continuous positive airway pressure) machine because he had sleep apnea.

Individuals with sleep apnea stop breathing several times while they sleep, preventing them from getting enough oxygen. CPAP flow generators develop a constant, controllable pressure that keeps the upper airway open to help maintain normal breathing. The condition is typically accompanied by loud snoring.

There are two major types of sleep apnea: [obstructive sleep apnea](#) and [central sleep apnea](#). Obstructive sleep apnea, the most common type, is caused by the closing of the upper airway and characterized by a 10 – 60 second pause between loud snores. The most prominent symptoms are snoring, breathing problems, excessive daytime sleepiness and associated obesity. Sleep apnea can cause forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, irritability, anxiety, depression, mood and/or behavioral changes, morning headaches, disorientation at awakening and loss of sexual interest.

Central sleep apnea is a medical condition in which breathing ceases during sleep (the body forgets to breathe). It is a neurological function where no “mechanical” obstruction is involved. Central sleep apnea is less common and is more difficult to diagnose.

Now that Earll has been diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea and fitted for a CPAP machine, he says he feels better than ever. “It took a little bit of getting used to wearing a mask at night,” he says. “But once you get used to it, its like putting on a pair of pajamas, it becomes just part of your nightly routine.”

And for those who think they may suffer from a sleep disorder but don't want to go through the test, Earll suggests: “You should do it, it's well worth your night out.”

According to Carolyn Beard, Outpatient Clinic coordinator, more than 200 people have been tested at the [Cox Monett Sleep Center](#) since it opened in 1994. The Sleep Center is located in the Outpatient Clinic and tests are performed Sunday through Thursday nights. Many of the technicians are registered by the national accrediting body of sleep technicians (RPSGT) or have credentials in respiratory care (CRT or RRT). The [Cox Regional Sleep Disorders Center](#) in Springfield is located in Cox Medial Plaza I on the Cox South campus. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Sleep tests are available through a physician's order. For more information call 354-1105 in Monett or 269-5575 in Springfield. ❖

Janell Patton is the director of Community Relations for Cox Monett.

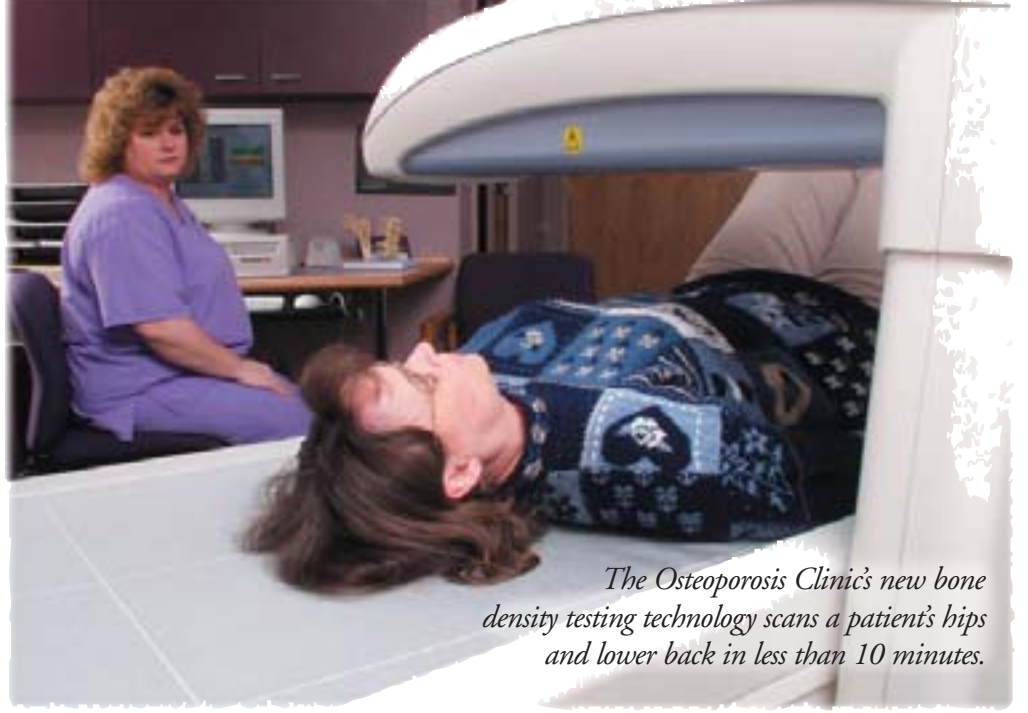
Advanced osteoporosis technology offered at Cox

by Nancy Waring

[Osteoporosis](#) is often called a “silent disease” since many women and men don’t realize that they have it until it has progressed over several years. But there is an easy, painless test for osteoporosis and [The Women’s Center Osteoporosis Clinic](#) has performed this test on thousands of people in the Ozarks over the past six years.

Bone density tests are fast, involve no pills or shots and patients don’t undress for it. A nurse or technologist with special training in the use of densitometry equipment performs the exam where a patient places one foot on a machine that measures the bone density in the heel. Patients also receive one-on-one counseling and education on the ways to combat bone loss and the medications that are available to treat the disease.

A new state-of-the-art GE/Lunar machine, funded by Cox Health Systems Auxiliary, is now available at The Women’s Center



The Osteoporosis Clinic’s new bone density testing technology scans a patient’s hips and lower back in less than 10 minutes.

Osteoporosis Clinic. This technology involves a scan of the lower back and hips and can be performed in less than 10 minutes. This machine provides more options for scans, with greater accuracy.

Bone density tests are available with a physician’s order and Cox currently offers two convenient locations to have this test done: The Women’s Center, located in the Medical Arts Center at Cox South and the Medical Tower at Cox North. A third osteoporosis clinic will open soon at Ferrell-Duncan Clinic. For more information or to schedule your bone density test, call 886-LADY. ❖

Nancy Waring is the director of The Women’s Center at Cox.

The [AARP](#) gives the following tips on symptoms never to treat yourself:

A feeling of pressure or squeezing in your chest

Severe pain, especially in the head, chest or radiating down one arm

Blurred vision

Trouble talking or swallowing

Weakness or paralysis on one side

Dizziness and confusion

Blood in your urine or stool

Unrelieved depression

Shortness of breath, fever and/or a cough with a yellow-green discharge

If you have any of these symptoms get to a doctor or emergency room immediately.

PLAYING

doctor

by Donna Barton

For many seniors the vast array of over-the-counter medications and remedies available today offer hope – a hope that they can “cure” themselves without visiting a doctor.

Although it is natural in certain instances to practice self-care before calling the doctor, self-care can prove unnecessary or even dangerous if it takes the place of medical diagnosis and professional treatment advice. Janice McCauley, manager of [Cox Senior Advantage](#), knows all too well the potential problems that can arise when seniors don’t consult their doctors about an illness or condition.

“I have talked with seniors who let injuries go because they think they can take care of problems themselves; but then they develop more serious problems and complications,” McCauley says. “These situations might have been avoided had they sought treatment earlier.”

McCauley adds that on the flip side of this issue are those seniors who, because they treat themselves and do not get an official medical diagnosis, bear the worry and expense of treating a condition they may or may not have. “I knew a patient who thought she had breast cancer and

was terrified; but when she finally saw a doctor she learned she had an infection, not cancer,” she says.

“I always encourage older adults to take an active part in their care,” McCauley says. “But being an advocate and self-care are definitely two different things.”

Dr. Richard Kissell, an internist with the Cox Diagnostic Clinic, cites factors such as health care cost, health care access and inflated advertising claims for over-the-counter medication effectiveness as contributors to why many seniors practice self-care.

“From a physician’s stand point self-care can be frustrating ... mainly because it can delay proper diagnosis and treatment,” he says.

Kissell also reminds patients that when physicians prescribe a medication they check for possible allergies and side effects to the patient.

“The best bargain in the medical field is having a physician that looks out for and looks after you,” Kissell says. “You can’t get that from choosing an over-the-counter remedy.” ❖

Donna Barton is a Public Relations assistant for Cox Health Systems.