

Screening for Myofunctional Therapy Needs and Possible Apnea

Children are tops on the list for screening at a young age, but anyone with obstructive sleep apnea should also be referred for myofunctional therapy. In mild cases, it may obviate the need for apnea treatment, but it also makes treatment less aggressive – less open or forward positioning if using a dental appliance or a lower flow rate if they use some sort of C-Pap.

Observation in reception area and during general conversation:

- Do they keep a lip seal except while talking?
- Do they breathe through their nose prior to speaking?
- Are their lips everted?
- Do they have a short upper lip?
- How large are their nostrils?
- Do they have a head forward posture (ear canal ahead of shoulder line) with the chin tipped up to help keep their airway open as with CPR?

In the chair before leaning back:

- Did you bring your tongue with you? OK, where is it? Do you notice if it's resting on the floor? Can you feel your teeth with your tongue tip? How about the roof of the mouth?
- If the tongue tip is "up" on the spot, ask if the middle is also up – like if you were to put a crumb 2" back, would your tongue crush it on the roof?
- Put your finger between the teeth and squirt some water in the cheek, then ask them to swallow. Can they? Do they try to put their lips together? Does the tongue come forward?
- If they can't, have them tray again with their teeth together. Ask them to notice what their tongue does while they swallow. At the same time, you'll look for the tongue coming forward. Even if you can't see the tongue, you can see water or bubbles flowing out between front teeth if they have a reverse swallow.
- Are the tonsils large? (indicates mouth-breathing)
- Are the lips chapped? (indicates mouth-breathing)
- Do they have allergies that cause nasal congestion?
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During intraoral exam:

- Do they have recession?
- Tongue scalloping?
- High narrow palate?
- Do they know if they have a deviated septum?
- Did they have orthodontics? Yes No If so, did they have a palate expander? Yes No
- During oral cancer exam, does their soft palate significantly lift?
- Tongue or lip tie? Severity_____
- What does their uvula look like? Is it long a drawn into the throat? Is the throat red?