

Home Sleep Apnea Test vs In-Lab Sleep Study

A home sleep apnea test (HSAT) is cheaper and more convenient and works well for adults with likely moderate-to-severe obstructive sleep apnea; an in-lab study is more complete and is needed for complex cases and children.

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Both tests can diagnose **obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)**, but they are not interchangeable. The right choice depends on your health history, your symptoms and your insurance.

Side-by-side

| | Home sleep apnea test (HSAT) | In-lab polysomnography (PSG) | |---|---|---| | Where | Your own bed | Sleep center | | Channels | Airflow, effort, oxygen, pulse (or peripheral arterial tone) | Brain waves, eyes, muscles, breathing, oxygen, ECG, video | | Diagnoses | Obstructive sleep apnea only | Apnea, limb movements, parasomnias, narcolepsy (with MSLT) | | CPAP titration | No | Yes (split-night or separate night) | | Typical cash price | \$150–\$600 | \$800–\$3,500+ | | CPT codes | 95800, 95806 (Medicare G0398–G0400) | 95810, 95811 |

Who is a good HSAT candidate

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine supports HSAT for uncomplicated adults with signs of moderate-to-severe OSA, such as loud snoring, witnessed pauses and daytime sleepiness.

Who should go to the lab

- Significant heart failure, COPD or neuromuscular disease
- Chronic opioid use or suspected central sleep apnea
- History of stroke or severe insomnia
- Suspected non-breathing sleep disorders
- Children
- A negative or inconclusive home test with ongoing symptoms

Practical tips

For a home test, practice putting the sensors on before bedtime and sleep in your normal position. If the recording is too short, most services repeat it at no charge; ask before you order.

Frequently asked questions

Is a home sleep test as accurate as an in-lab study?

For adults with a high likelihood of moderate-to-severe obstructive sleep apnea, a properly done HSAT is accurate enough to diagnose it. It can underestimate mild apnea because it measures recording time rather than true sleep time.

Will my insurance require a home test first?

Many commercial plans require an HSAT first for uncomplicated adult patients and only approve in-lab testing when the home test is negative, inconclusive or medically inappropriate.

Can a home test diagnose narcolepsy or insomnia?

No. Home sleep apnea tests only evaluate breathing during sleep. Narcolepsy requires in-lab PSG and an MSLT, and insomnia is usually diagnosed clinically.