



**The Canadian Thoracic Society and the Canadian Sleep Society announce publication of the [2026 Guideline on the Diagnosis of Obstructive Sleep Apnea in Children](#)**

March 24, 2026

The [Canadian Thoracic Society](#) (CTS), in partnership with the [Canadian Sleep Society](#) (CSS), is pleased to announce the [online publication](#) of a new evidence-based guideline on the diagnosis of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) in children. The aim of this guideline is to help clinicians to choose appropriate testing to identify OSA in children.

Obstructive sleep apnea is a common pediatric sleep disorder that can impact growth, behaviour and cardiovascular health. While polysomnography is the recommended standard for diagnosis of OSA in children, access to this testing is limited or absent in many regions, leading to delays in diagnosis and treatment.

The new CTS/CSS guideline is informed by a systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by an expert panel, evaluating alternative testing methods including clinical assessments, physiological measures, biomarkers, and combined diagnostic approaches. The guideline follows the Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluations (GRADE) framework, integrating scientific evidence with clinical expertise and patient/family preferences.

**Key Recommendations Include:**

- Polysomnography remains the standard for diagnosing OSA in children.
- Level 3/Home Sleep Apnea Testing may be considered as a second-line option for otherwise healthy children over 5 years of age when polysomnography is not accessible.
- Clinical tools and overnight oximetry can support assessment but should not be used alone to diagnose OSA.
- Other alternative tests are not recommended, even as adjunctive diagnostic tools.
- Further investment in research is needed to develop accurate, accessible, home-based testing options that align with patient and family preferences.

“This guideline provides clear, evidence-based guidance on alternative diagnostic tests to polysomnography and their utility for diagnosing OSA in children,” said Dr. Joanna MacLean (Division of Respiratory Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, University of Alberta), lead author of the guideline. “Our goal is to improve access to accurate diagnosis and ensure timely treatment, while also highlighting the need for continued research into feasible home-based testing.”

“This publication is a product of CTS’ commitment to advancing respiratory health through evidence-based practice guidelines” said Dr. Erika Penz, CTS President. “With high-quality, evidence-based recommendations, we aim to provide clinicians with the best information to care for their patients and to highlight where there is a need for health system change and further research.”

“The CSS is proud to collaborate on this important guideline” said Dr. Michael Mak, CSS Clinical Vice President. “Sleep health is critical for child development, and these recommendations will help ensure that families receive timely, accurate care.”

The guideline aims to standardize care across Canada by improving access to accurate diagnostic tests, minimize delays in treatment, and improve outcomes for children with suspected OSA. The full guideline, “CTS/CSS Guideline on the Diagnosis of Obstructive Sleep Apnea in Children,” is now available on the CTS and CSS websites.

#### **About the Canadian Thoracic Society**

The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) is Canada’s national specialty society for respirology that brings together specialists, researchers, educators and healthcare professionals working in respiratory, critical care, and sleep medicine. The CTS advocates lung health by enhancing the ability of healthcare professionals through leadership, collaboration, research, learning and advocacy, and providing the best respiratory practices in Canada.

#### **About the Canadian Sleep Society**

The Canadian Sleep Society (CSS) is a national organization committed to improving sleep for all Canadians through: support for research, promotion of high quality clinical care, education of professionals and the public, and advocacy for sleep and sleep disorders medicine.

#### **For Media Inquiries please contact:**

Faith Neale – Manager, Membership & Communications – [fneale@cts-sct.ca](mailto:fneale@cts-sct.ca)

Arsenio Paez – Executive Director – [media@css-scs.ca](mailto:media@css-scs.ca)

To request further information: [cts-sct.ca](http://cts-sct.ca) / [info@cts-sct.ca](mailto:info@cts-sct.ca) or [css-scs.ca](http://css-scs.ca) / [info@css-scs.ca](mailto:info@css-scs.ca)