



What Causes Snoring?

For your dental health.

As many as 50 percent of adults have a snoring problem. Snoring is the sound that the soft tissues in your mouth and throat make as air passes through them, causing them to vibrate. When you're awake, the muscles surrounding these structures keep the air passage open. But when you're asleep, these same muscles relax, allowing your lower jaw and tongue to drop back and partially block the opening of your airway. More force is needed to push air through the obstructed airway, which means that once it passes through, the air is moving very fast. The high speed of the air causes the surrounding soft tissues to vibrate, and the sound of those vibrating tissues is what's typically called snoring.

Of course, not everyone snores when their muscles relax during sleep. Many factors affect why people snore, including excess bodyweight, drug and alcohol use, congestion, swollen tonsils, and aging. Heavy snoring and delayed breathing of ten seconds or more may be caused by a more serious condition called sleep apnea.

What is sleep apnea?

Sleep apnea is a far more serious condition. It occurs when the airway is completely blocked by the soft tissues in the back of the throat. When the airway is obstructed to such a degree, less oxygen reaches the blood and the brain. In response, the brain gives the "red alert" signal to the airway to unblock itself by tightening up. This causes the individual to gasp or snort abruptly, restoring breathing to normal. The cycle repeats itself throughout the night, disrupting sleep and leaving the individual exhausted after a night of on-again, off-again sleep. The condition can also cause headaches, moodiness, daytime sleepiness, and an inability to function properly.

How can I minimize snoring?

Some steps you can take to avoid snoring include:

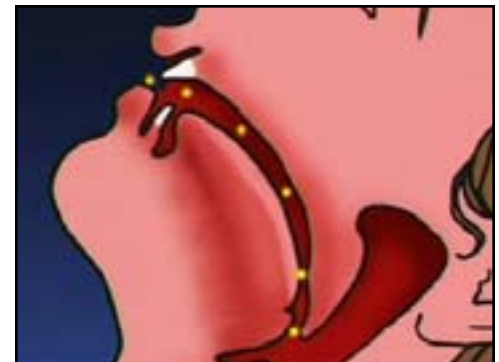
- Losing weight
- Using a humidifier
- Wearing nasal strips
- Avoiding large meals right before bedtime
- Avoiding strenuous exercise within two or three hours of bedtime
- Avoiding alcohol or sleeping pills within four hours of bedtime
- Avoiding caffeine, nicotine, or any other stimulants within four hours of bedtime

How we can help

If the above techniques don't lessen your snoring problem, we can customize an oral appliance to keep your airway open. These appliances slightly reposition your lower jaw, tongue, and soft palate. If you think you might have sleep apnea, please tell us about it so that we can recommend the most appropriate course of treatment.



Snoring interferes with sleep



Your airway



Loved ones will sleep better