

## Snoring: What Causes it, how it can affect you and how to solve it

Almost everyone snores from time to time whether they are aware of it or not. You may have even noticed that your pet snores from time to time. Babies have been known to snore as young as a few weeks of age. Obviously snoring can be quite common; however, it can also result in a number of problems. In some cases, snoring can become so loud that it disturbs one's sleeping partner. This can result in problems within the relationship as well as problems concentrating at work due to a lack of sleep. The occurrence of heavy snoring can also lead to many serious health issues. Learning and understanding the causes of snoring as well as possible solutions can not only provide an improvement in one's healthy but also relationships and provide better sleep quality.



### Causes of Snoring

Snoring is most commonly caused by the airways in the throat and nose narrowing during sleep. As a result, the air which is inhaled and exhaled must be pushed through a much smaller passageway. This results in the noise that we commonly known as snoring; generally caused by the loose tissue located within the back of the throat vibrating.

Studies have revealed that individuals who are prone to snoring commonly have an excess amount of nasal and mouth tissue or have tissue which is looser than normal, thus resulting in a tendency of the tissue to vibrate. It is for this same reason that an individual who is overweight may be prone to snoring. Obesity is commonly associated with additional fat tissue in the throat and neck. This extra tissue can obstruct the individual's airways, also causing snoring.

In some cases, the position of the individual's tongue can also result in snoring. This is because when the tongue is positioned incorrectly, it can interfere with the normal breathing process. When the breathing process is not smooth, the person may also be more prone to snoring.

It should be noted that not all of the causes of snoring are within the control of the individual. The tendency to snore can be inherited. Some individuals inherit a narrowed airway, which can increase their tendency to snore. When this is the cause of an individual snoring, the cause is not actually within the control of the snorer. That said; however, there are solutions which can be utilized to reduce the tendency to snore, despite the presence of a smaller airway.

While women can certain have problems snoring, surveys have shown that snoring does tend to be more prevalent in men than in women. This is because of the fact that men naturally have a smaller air passage than women. As a result they are naturally more likely to have problems snoring than women.

In many cases, people may notice that they have an increased tendency to snore when they have a cold or some other health issue such as a sinus infection, asthma or allergies. This can occur even in people who do not normally tend to snore when they are healthy. These types of health conditions can result in the nasal airway becoming blocked. Inhalation can then become difficult. Noisy breathing, or snoring, is often the result.

In some cases, individuals who have never previously had a problem with snoring may develop a tendency to snore as they age. This typically occurs with the onset of middle-age. As individuals become older, the throat naturally becomes narrower. In addition, the muscle tone that is present within the throat becomes reduced as well. Both of these factors can result in an increased tendency to snore.

A history of smoking or even exposure to second-hand smoke can also make an individual more prone to snoring. This is because individuals who smoke or who are exposed to smoke tend to experience muscles within the throat that are more relaxed. Smoking and smoke exposure also tends to result in lung and nasal congestion, which can lead to snoring.

Alcohol and medications may also play a role in snoring. Certain types of medications as well as alcohol can also cause the throat and tongue muscles to become relaxed. When these muscles are more relaxed the chance of snoring increases.

The severity of snoring can vary. In some cases it can be quite mild. Generally, when snoring is mild, the noise will stop when the individual changes their position or they wake up. Of course, even mild snoring can be disruptive to both the snorer as well as their sleep partner because the sleep partner may tend to nudge the snorer in an effort to get them to wake up or change positions to stop the snoring. As a result, both may experience a lower quality of sleep.

Snoring can also be severe. When snoring is severe the individual may suffer from snoring that is continual. In this case, the snoring typically does not stop when the individual changes position. Severe snoring can be quite loud and last throughout the night.

## **Effects of Snoring**

Many individuals who snore claim that it does not interfere with their quality of sleep. In fact, they often question why it is such a problem for their sleep partner due to the fact that their own snoring never awakens them. This is because many individuals who snore tend to be deep or heavy sleepers. Even if their snoring does not disturb them it often does destroy the ability of their sleep partner to receive a good night's sleep.

As a result, the realities of snoring can cause serious repercussions in relationships. As a result of continual snoring, the snorer's sleep partner may experience excessive fatigue and may be cranky. This can create problems within the relationship. Studies indicate that individuals who share a bed with someone who snores, can easily be awakened nearly two dozen times per hour. As a result, sleep partners of snorers may make the decision to sleep in a different room. This can have a profound effect on the relationship because it can interrupt physical intimacy as well as the bedtime chatting that is common with most couples. The sleep partner tends to feel resentful, irritable and exhausted. The snorer often tends to experience feelings of frustration and isolation. Over time, these

feelings can place a tremendous strain on the relationship; resulting in even greater anxiety on the part of both persons.

In addition to relationship problems, snoring can also lead to serious health issues. The most common health problem of individuals who snore is lack of sleep. Even though they may not be aware of it, people who snore may awaken frequently. Although they may not awaken due to their own snoring, they do tend to be jostled or nudged frequently by their sleep partner in an effort to stop the snoring. This can result in sleep deprivation that may lead to exhausted, irritability as well as a lack of productivity at work and school. The possibility of an auto accident also exists when an individual does not receive adequate sleep.

Snoring can also lead to other health issues including a reduced oxygen supply to the individual's brain. This can result in health problems such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, high blood pressure and Type II diabetes. Concentration and the ability to focus on tasks at hand can also occur when the individual is not receiving an adequate supply of oxygen to the brain.

Discovering the cause of snoring is always important due to the fact that the presence of snoring can often indicate an underlying health issue. One of the most common underlying causes of snoring is a sleep disorder known as sleep apnea. This condition can be life-threatening. Many causes of snoring result from narrowed airways. In the case of sleep apnea, the individual suffers from a breathing obstruction. This is quite different from a narrowed passageway. In a narrowed passageway, the airway is not completely blocked. There is simply less space available for the air way pass through. When a breathing obstruction is present, the airway is completely blocked.

As a result of this disorder, the individual tends to stop breathing altogether and must awaken in order to actually begin breathing again. As a result, people who suffer from sleep apnea tend to awaken numerous times per night so that they can begin breathing again, even though they may have no recollection of this the next day. The individual's sleep partner does tend to be aware of these occurrences; however, because they are often awakened at the same time the snorer must awaken to restart their breathing. Sleep apnea can be life threatening due to the risk that the individual may not awaken to restart their breathing.

While snoring is the most common symptom of this condition, it should be noted that the presence of snoring alone does not always indicate the presence of this condition. In fact, individuals who suffer from mild snoring will not involve any type of breathing cessation. Individuals who are concerned that they may suffer from this disorder should speak with their physician in order to determine whether their snoring is the result of sleep apnea or some other cause. A sleep study may be necessary to properly diagnose or rule out the presence of sleep apnea.

Persons who suffer from mild snoring can receive benefit from many different types of solutions. Finding an effective solution can provide improved sleep quality for both the snorer and their sleep partner. When the quality of sleep is improved, the quality of life and the intimacies of a relationship can frequently be restored.

## Solutions for Snoring

There are many different types of solutions that can be quite effective, depending on the exact cause of the snoring. If the individual is overweight, losing weight can be quite effective because it can reduce the amount of fatty tissue that is present within the airway. Improving one's physical activity and reducing portion sizes can lead to improved fitness and ultimately better breathing and sleeping at night.

Persons who smoke may also find relief by quitting while individuals who are exposed to smoke can find relief by reducing their exposure to second-hand smoke.

In some cases it may be necessary to change one's sleep posture. Individuals who sleep on their back tend to experience increased problems with snoring due to the fact that when sleeping in this position the soft tissues that are located at the back of the throat have a tendency to block the airway. Changing to a different sleeping position, such as sleeping on one or the other side, may provide some relief. Specially designed sleeping devices, including body pillows can make it easier to learn how to sleep in a different position.

Elevating one's head can also provide relief. Specially constructed pillows designed especially for snorer's can assist the individual in elevating their head so that their airways are not blocked during sleep.

In some cases, taking certain medication or eating certain foods right before bedtime may exacerbate the tendency to snore. Drinking alcohol at night can also result in an increased tendency to snore. You may find that avoiding certain foods and cutting back or avoiding alcohol at night can provide relief. One of the primary reasons that alcohol triggers snoring is the fact that it tends to relax certain muscles within the airways. Tranquilizers and sleeping pills can have the same result.

Foods which are dairy based and contain a high amount of fat can also trigger snoring as can soy milk products. High fat dairy and soy products can prevent mucus from draining, resulting in snoring. Persons who enjoy a late night snack may try switching to skim milk to achieve relief.

Clearing your nasal passages can also provide relief, particularly if you suffer from allergies, sinus problems or you have a cold. One possible solution is the use of nasal decongestants before going to bed at night. These products can allow you to breathe more easily, reducing the noisy breathing commonly associated with snoring. Individuals who are concerned about taking decongestants may also wish to try homeopathic solutions such as nasal strips which can assist in opening the nasal passageways. Remember; however, that the use of antihistamines frequently results in the relaxation of throat muscles, which can exacerbate breathing problems and snoring.

Finding effective solutions for snoring cannot also produce a better quality of sleep but can also improve one's quality of life and relationships as well.