

SNORING

WHY DO WE SNORE?

SNORING is noisy breathing while we sleep. It's a common condition that can affect anyone, although it happens more often in men and in people who are overweight, and tends to get worse with age.

If you're a long-term snorer, you not only disrupt the sleep patterns of those close to you, but your own quality of sleep is also affected.

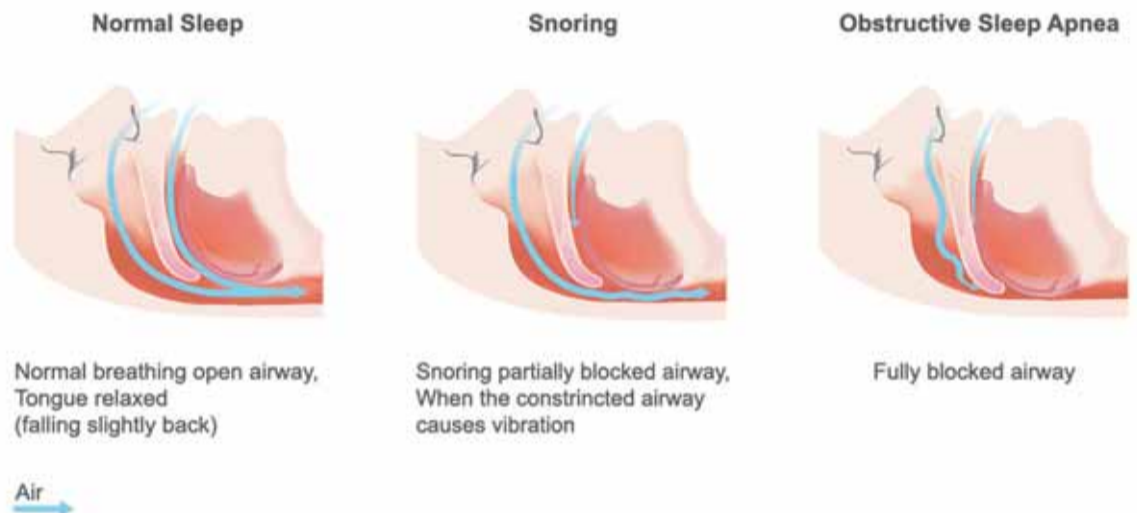
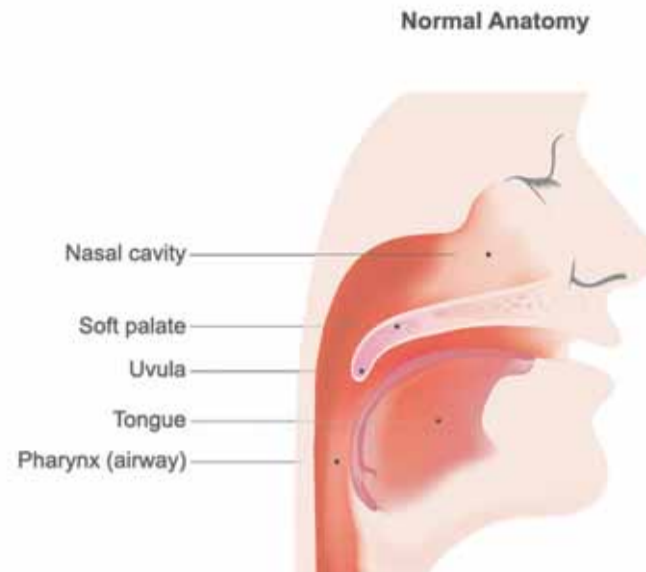
Snoring can, in itself, be a symptom of a health problem, such as obstructive sleep apnea. Talk to your

doctor if you're overly sleepy during the day, if you snore often or very loudly, or if your partner notices that you sometimes stop breathing altogether. You might need medical help, so you (and your loved ones) can get a good night's sleep.

Snoring occurs when the flow of air through your mouth and nose is blocked. Several things can interfere with air flow, including:

- Blocked nasal airways. Some people snore only during allergy season or

Snoring and Obstructive Sleep Apnea



when they have a sinus infection. Problems to do with your nose such as a deviated septum (when the wall that separates one nostril from the other is off-centre) or nasal polyps can also block your airways.

- Poor muscle tone in your throat and tongue. Throat and tongue muscles can be too relaxed, which allows

them to collapse into your airway.

- Bulky throat tissue. Being overweight can cause this. Some children have large tonsils and adenoids that can cause snoring.
- Long soft palate and/or uvula. A long soft palate or a long uvula (dangling tissue at the back of the throat) can narrow the opening from nose to throat. When one breathes, this causes both palate and uvula to vibrate and bump against one another, blocking the airways.
- Alcohol and drug use. Drinking alcohol or taking muscle relaxants can also cause the tongue and throat muscles to relax excessively.
- Sleeping position. Sleeping on your back can cause you to snore. Sleeping on a pillow that is too soft or too large can have the same effect.
- Sleep deprivation. The throat muscles might relax excessively if one does not get enough sleep.

Your partner might be the one who tells you that you snore. Your doctor will discuss the symptoms with both you and your partner, as well as your medical history and also examine you to identify what is blocking your airways, such as for example chronic nasal congestion due to rhinitis or sinusitis, a deviated septum, or swollen tonsils. He might also prescribe some tests such as:

- Imaging tests. An X-ray, MRI scan, or CT scan.
- Sleep study. You might need to have a machine monitor your sleep while you're at home or spend the night in a lab for a test called Polysomnography. This test monitors your heart rate, breathing, and brain activity during sleep.

The treatments for snoring can include:

- Lifestyle changes, namely losing weight, stopping smoking or drinking alcohol before going to bed.
- Oral appliances such as a plastic device placed in

the mouth while you sleep to keep your airways open might help.

- Surgery. Several types of procedures may help stop snoring; removal of soft tissue from the throat or stiffen the soft palate.
- CPAP - Continuous Positive Airway Pressure - this equipment treats sleep apnea and might reduce snoring by blowing air into the airways while you sleep.

Snoring doesn't seem to cause complications. But sleep apnea can cause problems, including a strain on the heart. Long-term obstructive sleep apnea often raises blood pressure and may be the cause of an enlarged heart, resulting in a higher risk for a heart attack and stroke.

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