

Treat Apnea to Stop Snoring

Anyone who has ever spent a sleepless night with a noisy partner is well aware what snoring is. Snoring can test the strength of any relationship, but understanding the cause of snoring can make it a little easier to cope.

Snoring

is noisy breathing caused when the nasal passageways and upper respiratory tract become partially or fully blocked. When the blockage causes breathing to stop during sleep at least five times every hour and for periods in excess of ten seconds, it can suggest the presence of sleep apnea. This can be an very dangerous condition that may cause the afflicted person to literally die asleep.

Snoring caused by sleep

apnea is particularly noisy and can even disrupt entire households. The whole family can suffer right along with the snorer.

If your doctor

suspects that you have sleep apnea, he or she will examine your nose and throat to look for obvious causes of obstructions, such as an anatomical deviation or nasal polyps. This can be done by an endoscopic examination or a CT scan. Once a preliminary diagnosis is made, you may be invited to attend a sleep laboratory to undergo sleep studies.

Sleep studies

are conducted to monitor the changes in body processes during a period of normal sleep. During the study, doctors will use instruments to continuously monitor your body functions and take various measurements, including

- * brain activity

- * oxygen levels in the blood

- *

 - heart rate

- * blood pressure

- * airflow in airways

- *

 - movement of chest and diaphragm

If sleep apnea is diagnosed, you

will be advised to abstain from alcohol use, and to avoid taking any medication designed to help you sleep. You may be advised to diet if you are overweight. Simply changing your position in bed and sleeping on your side may be all it takes to improve the condition and stop the snoring.

Several

treatment options are available for those with sleep apnea. Generally, treatments involve offering positive pressure ventilation, where air is steadily and continuously pumped through a tightly fitting nasal mask. The increase in air pressure helps to keep the airway open, resulting in easier breathing and reduced snoring levels.

If self-help steps and

positive air ventilation don't bring the relief you need, you might

consider surgical options. Surgical procedures can involve removing enlarged tonsils and adenoids, or reconstructing the soft palate.

Obstructive

sleep apnea, the most common form of this condition, usually responds well to treatment. Central sleep apnea, where brain or nerve damage may be present, is less responsive and may require drug therapies that act on the brain to stimulate breathing.

The snoring caused by sleep apnea is

particularly noisy and disruptive. It sounds positively painful for the sufferer, as their reflexes cause them to take deep, raspy breaths every ten minutes or so. Sleep patterns are disturbed both for the snorer, and for his or her partner. Snoring due to sleep apnea can be dangerous both medically and emotionally, so it is important to seek medical treatment.