

Snoring and sleep apnoea

A dental splint to reposition the jaw at night can often be helpful to sufferers. Many orthodontists have the expertise to provide the necessary splints.

What is snoring?

The main cause of snoring is the partial closure of the airway during sleep. During sleep muscles in the neck relax and for some people the soft tissues in the upper throat vibrate, making the sound we know as snoring.

Now you know about snoring, do you know about Sleep Apnoea?

What is Obstructive Sleep Apnoea?

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) is a serious medical condition that is more widespread than initially thought. In the UK Obstructive Sleep Apnoea occurs on a similar frequency as Diabetes and double that of severe Asthma.

In Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) a person stops breathing while asleep, which can be up to 50 to 60 times per hour. These breathing interruptions, known as "Sleep Apnoea" occur when the airway narrows so much that it closes. If we compare Obstructive Sleep Apnoea to simple snoring, simple snoring is the vibration of the soft tissue in the throat caused by a partial closure of the airway, whereas OSA is caused by the complete closure of the airway. The closure of the airway causes breathing to stop, which in turn reduces the oxygen level in the blood. The brain reacts to cause a partial waking but the snorer will often not be aware of this partial waking during the night.

As a result of the sleep fragmentation, many sufferers have excessive daytime sleepiness, resulting in their inability to concentrate, experience marital disharmony and may fall asleep at unexpected and inappropriate times. Obstructive Sleep Apnoea makes them at least twice as likely to have a motor accident when they are driving. However, this is not the worst news. Research has demonstrated that the repeated falls in oxygen levels in the blood caused by OSA are linked to the development of high blood pressure, heart disease, strokes and diabetes. The reality is that untreated OSA is a killer and needs to be taken seriously.

There are many snorers who simply don't even know how serious their condition might be. An OSA sufferer will snore loudly, their partner may tell them that they also stop breathing during sleep and both could find that proper sleep becomes impossible leading to problems during the day.

Snoring Treatment

The four clinically proven options are

- Mandibular Advancement Splint therapy,
- Continuous Positive Airways Pressure,
- Weight loss and Surgery
- Mandibular Advancement Splints(generic name)

Mandibular Advancement Splints (MAS) are customised mouth pieces made for each patient to be worn at night time to treat snoring and obstructive sleep apnoea. Modern devices permit the lower jaw to be advanced in a gradual manner and so not only improve their action but also help the patient to adapt more gradually to them. Such appliances can be made by your dentist or orthodontist, provided they have received adequate training in their use and the assessment of risk for obstructive sleep apnoea.

(visit: solutions4snoring.co.uk to locate your nearest trained dentist).

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) is the gold standard for sufferers of severe obstructive sleep apnoea, There are many types of CPAP equipment and a number of CPAP products. CPAP treatment is not recommended for the treatment of simple snoring.

Losing weight Loss of weight can reduce or stop snoring and there are numerous other health benefits but it is a gradual process.

Snoring Surgery Surgery can be used to treat snoring but is not always successful and can be extremely painful. It is not regarded as an option for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea

Related Links

[For further information on the management of Sleep Apnoea see the SIGN Guideline No 73](#)

