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HOW TO STOP SNORING? What are the best treatments?

FOR DR. ROZE BIOHEALTH CLINICS | 04 November 2022

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If you or your partner snore regularly or occasionally, you might wonder how to stop snoring. You're not alone. In adults between 30 and 60 years old, 44% of men and 28% of women snore regularly.

Over age 60, around half of all people snore regularly.

Snoring is the sound that results from air passing through your airway when it is partially blocked. Tissues at the top of your airway touch each other and vibrate, making you snore. Virtually all adults snore occasionally.

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1/- What causes snoring?

There are lots of reasons why someone might snore, ranging from lifestyle factors such as being overweight or drinking alcohol to more serious health conditions. Most cases of snoring, however, are not due to anything serious. But they can be nuisance!

Here are some of the most common causes of snoring and some things you can try to help you stop snoring:

- **Being overweight**

Being overweight can cause you to snore, as fat may be distributed around your neck and midriff, compressing your airways, pushing your diaphragm up and compressing the ribcage, leading to a reduction in lung capacity.

It is more common for men to gain fat in these places, which could help to explain why men are more likely to snore than women.

If you are overweight and this is causing you to snore, try to lose weight by following a balanced diet, cutting down on unhealthy snacks and taking part in more regular exercise.

- **Drinking alcohol**

Drinking alcohol before bedtime can relax your throat muscles and decrease your defences against obstructions to your airways and so can make you snore.

Try to cut down on your alcohol consumption by limiting your drinks to no more than 14 units each week, spread over three days.

If you would like to cut down on your alcohol intake, you might also like to try to have a few alcohol-free days each week.

- **Your sleeping position**

Lying flat on your back in bed can cause the muscles and flesh in your throat to relax and block your airway, causing you to snore.

Sleeping on your side is the best position to sleep in if you want to reduce your snoring as this reduces the compression of your airways.

It can be difficult to change your sleeping position, if you have been sleeping that way for a long time.

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But there are some things you can do to help with this, including buying specially designed pillows and vibrating training devices, which vibrate each time you turn onto your back. If you have a partner, they may already “help” you with this by giving you a nudge every time you roll onto your back and start snoring!



- **Smoking**



Smoke can agitate the space behind your throat and nose causing swelling and a build up of mucus.



This will cause the airways to be too thin and reduce air flow which can result in heavier snoring.



- **Sleep deprivation**

Not getting enough sleep can encourage the muscles and tissues in your throat to relax more than usual and this can partially block your airways.

This is a bit of a catch 22 as snoring can mean that you are often waking up throughout the night and not getting enough sleep, which in turn makes your snoring worse!

There are lots of things that you can do to help you get more good quality sleep including eating a healthy balanced diet and using products like sleep candles and sleep sprays.

- **Nasal and sinus problems**

Blocked airways or a stuffy nose can make breathing more difficult and create a vacuum in the throat, which can cause snoring.

You might find that if you are suffering from a cold or hayfever that you tend to snore, even if you do not usually.

2/- What is sleep apnea?

Sometimes snoring can be caused by an underlying health condition. Snoring is one of the most common symptoms of sleep apnea. Sleep apnoea is a serious sleep condition which causes your breath to stop and start during your sleep.

Other sleep apnoea symptoms include making gasping or choking noises during sleep and waking up a lot throughout the night. This condition can be serious if not treated and so it is important that you see your GP if you think that you may have sleep apnoea

3/ - How to stop snoring ?

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- **Try a tongue workout!**

A Brazilian study has found that snorers who exercise their tongue cut the frequency of their snoring by 36% and its total power by 59%. The researchers helped noisy sleepers to tone up their tongues with several moves:

- **How to do a tongue workout**

1. Push the tip of their tongue against the roof of their mouth and slide the tongue backward
2. Suck the tongue upwards against the roof of their mouth and press the entire tongue against the roof of the mouth
3. Force the back of the tongue against the floor of the mouth while keeping the tip of the tongue in contact with the bottom, front teeth

- **Limit the pints**

Alcohol makes us relax, but excessive muscle relaxation leads to excessive snoring.

Sleep is made up of rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep.

You drift in and out of the two in 90-minute cycles through the night, but drinking – even a little – disrupts that pattern, which promotes poorer breathing, and therefore a bed-shakingly noisy snore-fest.

So you need to cut the booze for a snore-free snooze.

Smokers are twice as likely to snore as non-smokers too, and even second-hand smoke can irritate the membrane that lines your nostrils, so even passive smoking is a no-no.

- **Clear Nasal passages**

- Nasal congestion can prevent clear breathing, and encourage snoring.
- Allergies can trigger nasal congestion, and studies have found that they are linked to sleep disorders, including snoring.

So if you get hay fever you may also have a problem with dust mites.

Try woollen bedding – dust mites can't survive in wool, use antihistamine if you have a known allergy, and use a decongestant nasal spray for a few days when allergies flare up.

Homoeopathic nasal sprays are safe for long-term use if they're helping, so spritz away. Just check the packaging to be certain.

- **Spoon the night away**

Snorers tend to love lying on their backs, but this position causes your tongue to sag and obstruct your airways during sleep – cue snoring. We're not suggesting you sew a golf ball into the back of your partner's PJs, but if you can find a way to make a different sleeping position comfortable – go for it.

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- **Try to lose some weight**

Extra pounds can narrow your airways, which contributes to snoring. It's particularly problematic for people who suffer with obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA), which is when the walls of your throat relax and narrow, causing you to stop breathing for as much as 90 seconds. You then give a huge snort to get you back to breathing.

- **Try out throat spray, nose strips or a strap**

Throat sprays and nose strips are the most common.

- Sprays are used to lubricate the soft tissues at the back of the throat to minimise the vibrations which cause the familiar snoring sound.
- Nose strips help to keep the nostrils open while you're asleep, which helps the air to flow freely in and out of the nasal passage.
- Straps can also be used to help keep your mouth closed while you're asleep. Strapped around your chin and head, these straps work by keeping your mouth closed to limit the vibrations in your throat.

- **Invest in an oral device**

There are also oral devices that can be used to help:

1. A continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine blows air into your nose and throat via a mask to ensure your airways are kept open.
2. A mandibular advancement device (MAD), aimed at tongue snorers, are designed to hold the lower and tongue forwards to make more space to breathe, preventing snoring.

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