

Snoring & Apnea

Snoring & apnea differences

During sleep, many people suffer from problem breathing ranging from mild snoring to a dangerous condition called obstructive sleep apnea.

Snoring is the sound the soft tissues in the mouth and throat make when they vibrate. When you sleep, the tongue, soft palate, and lower jaw relax and narrow your airway. This increases the speed of the air flowing through the airway and causes the soft tissues to vibrate, much like air whooshing out of a balloon.

Obstructive sleep apnea causes sufferers to stop breathing periodically during sleep. The soft tissues collapse against the back of the throat, cutting off the airway for 10 seconds or more.

Lack of oxygen forces you to partially awaken, often with a loud gasp in order to open the airway. The cycle repeats many times every night, sometimes up to 40 times an hour.

The symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea

Some of the most common symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea include:

- ❖ Loud snoring, gasping, or jerking during sleep
- ❖ Headache and sore throat
- ❖ Confusion upon wakening, difficulty concentrating, irritability, or depression
- ❖ Excessive sleepiness during the day
- ❖ Cardiovascular problems, such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, and congestive heart failure



Soft tissue relaxes, narrowing the airway and produces snoring



Apnea appliances

Diagnosis and treatment

Several simple actions may help you stop snoring, including losing weight, avoiding alcohol, sleeping on your side, and using a humidifier.

If we suspect that you suffer from sleep apnea, we recommend that you see your physician as soon as possible for a complete diagnosis. Then we can work closely with your medical team to treat the condition.

One of the most common treatments for snoring and sleep apnea is a customized oral appliance. An appliance pulls the lower jaw forward and keeps the airway clear. To make a custom oral appliance, we take impressions and bite registrations of your teeth. From these records, precise working models of your teeth are made, and the models are used to create an appliance specific to your needs.

Some oral appliances are made in our office, while others are made in a dental laboratory. When the appliance is ready, we check the fit and make any necessary adjustments.

For the first few nights, you place the appliance into your mouth about 15 minutes before sleep to help your mouth get used to it. Some initial soreness is normal, but let us know if the appliance is otherwise uncomfortable, so we can adjust the fit.