

# Solutions to stop snoring



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Many people can relate to the problems that snoring causes. In fact, The Statistic Brain Research Institute has estimated that 40% of people over 40 are known snorers. However, this figure doesn't reflect the true number of sufferers, as often it is the bed partner whose sleep is disturbed, mostly due to the chorus of unpleasant grunts, grumbles and snorts.

A person snores when the muscles in their throat which are used to keep the airways open, relax causing a partial obstruction of airflow. The actual sound comes from the vibration of the soft palate on the roof of the mouth as the flow of air struggles to pass through. Certain factors can affect or cause a person's snoring, for example, if they sleep on their back, are overweight, if they smoke or have been drinking alcohol. Some medications which contain sedatives, such as sleeping pills and antihistamines, can also worsen or cause a person to snore.

The body uses sleep to restore brain development and recuperate after the day. Even just one night without sleep has noticeable effects, such as exhaustion, grumpiness and a lack of energy and con-

centration. An occasional sleepless night is unlikely to harm your health in the long-term, but with a continued lack of good quality sleep the body loses its ability to function effectively.

Many people undergo years of constant exhaustion believing that it is just a symptom of aging, when in fact the reason is that they are unknowingly suffering from a sleep disorder.

Snoring can also be a symptom of a much worse health issue. When the blockage in the throat causes a person to stop breathing this may be a sign of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA). The London Sleep Centre has recently opened a new branch in Dubai which aims to be 'a convenient one-stop solution for all sleep related concerns'.

Globally, thousands of accidents occur due to lack of sleep and fatigue. As the number one cause of death and disability in the Middle East, the link between sleep deprivation and road traffic accidents should not be ignored. These worrying facts have led to an increase in recommendations for preventative measures. The founder of The Sleep Centre, Michael Oko, a UK government advisor on OSA, claims that treating these sleep disorders will lead to a reduction in road deaths.

As many as 75% of people who snore are thought to suffer from OSA and research from The Sleep Centre suggests that OSA affects 22% of the UAE. Severe OSA can cause a person to stop breathing over 100 times a night. This can seriously impact both the quality and quantity of sleep that a person has, as well as put them at higher risk of other health issues such as stroke, heart disease, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol. A long period of sleep does not necessarily mean a good night's sleep. Someone with OSA may sleep for a long time but still wake up exhausted. This is due to the repeated interruption of breathing which momentarily

wakes the brain in order to tell the body to breathe again. There are a number of treatment options for OSA, but the most popular and effective method is Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP). This involves the use of an oxygen mask attached to a machine which is designed to increase the air pressure in the throat which stops the muscles from relaxing and obstructing the airway.

For most people though, wearing a mask at night and using a CPAP machine is either not practical or will be seen as a treatment of last resort. This is why I welcome a simple yet innovative throat spray called Asonor that Durbin is now stocking. The spray helps keep the muscles in the throat tight and has been shown to improve 75% of users' sleep.

Snoring should certainly not be something you feel you have to live with. There are a variety of treatments, solutions and preventative measures such as avoiding sedatives and just 'looking after your health' can also have a huge impact. If symptoms persist however, then the cause may be sleep apnoea, in which case you should see your doctor to get the problem resolved. **MEH**

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