

Snoring and Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is a disruption of breathing while asleep. Approximately 90% of people who have sleep apnea don't know that they have it! Although episodes of choking or gasping for air might occur hundreds of times throughout the night, you may not even remember or know you are gasping for air in your sleep.

Usually it is the bed partner who first notices that the person is struggling to breathe. If left untreated, this common disorder can be life-threatening.

Symptoms of Sleep Apnea

- Frequent silences during sleep. This normally means you have stopped breathing(apnea).
- Choking during sleep
- Gasping for air
- Sudden awakenings
- Waking up in a sweat
- Daytime sleepiness
- Falling asleep at inappropriate times

Causes and risk factors of obstructive sleep apnea can be one or more of the following:

- Being overweight or obese
- Having enlarged tonsils or adenoids
- Deviated septum, shape of head and neck, receding chin, enlarged tongue

Snoring

If the structures in your throat are bulky or throat muscles relax too much, the airway may be partly blocked. Air flowing through the throat makes these structures vibrate. The vibration is what causes snoring. The position of the tongue can also get in the way of smooth breathing.

Sleeping in separate bedrooms doesn't have to be the remedy for your snoring. In fact, there are many effective treatments for snoring. Discovering the cause of your snoring and finding the right cure will vastly improve your health, your relationships, and, of course, your sleep.

It also makes sense to try some simple non-invasive treatments first to see if they will reduce or prevent your snoring: Sleep on your side, elevate the head of your bed, limit alcohol consumption, clear your nasal passages, and lose weight are a few things you can try to see if your snoring resolves.

An overnight sleep study may be ordered as part of your evaluation. See our Sleep Center Page for more in depth information on our services.