



Snoring is the sound made by air passing through narrowed airways, causing parts of the throat or nose to vibrate.

When we breathe, air travels down the throat and into the lungs via the windpipe (trachea). When we sleep the muscles in the throat relax. In some people they relax to such a degree that the structures they support collapse and partially block the airway. As air is inhaled and exhaled these structures can vibrate, producing distinctive snoring sounds.

Snoring can be disruptive – both for the snorer and anyone within earshot. Snorers often don't get the quality of sleep needed, which can lead to daytime sleepiness. Heavy snorers have a greater risk than those who don't snore of developing high blood pressure at a younger age.

The most exaggerated and potentially dangerous form of snoring is **obstructive sleep apnoea** (OSA). This is when snoring is interrupted by frequent episodes of totally obstructed breathing, semi waking, and a resumption of breathing.

OSA is characterised by low circulating oxygen levels which reduce the available oxygen for optimum function of the main organs in the body, such as the heart and the brain.

It has the potential to cause high blood pressure and heart rhythm abnormalities.

If OSA is suspected, a doctor should be consulted.



There are many treatment options that may help with snoring.

Treatment for snoring differs from treatment for obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). It is important to ensure the person does not also have OSA before treatment for snoring is undertaken.

Lifestyle changes

- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Exercise regularly
- Reduce alcohol intake and avoid alcohol close to bedtime
- Sleep on one side rather than on the back
- Avoid taking sleeping tablets
- Don't smoke

Devices and medications

Nasal strips	worn across the bridge of the nose, can help to open the nasal passages
Mouth guards	help to hold the jaw forward, preventing structures obstructing the airway
Collars	also help to keep the jaw forward and open the airway
Sprays	unblock congested nasal passages (some sprays should not be used on a long-term basis so consult a doctor)

Alternative treatments

Some people find alternative therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy and herbal remedies helpful in reducing snoring.

The type of treatment will depend on the cause of the snoring. Treatment can be either non-surgical or surgical. Surgery is not usually recommended until non-surgical treatments have been tried and have proven unsuccessful.