National Stop Snoring week 22nd to 28th April 2025

So, it that time of year again when we at the York Dental Sleep Clinic give advice to help you to stop snoring.

Snoring affects millions of people worldwide, causing not only disrupted sleep for the snorer but also for their partners. It's essential to address this common issue to improve overall health and well-being.

We will be providing guidance on risk factor avoidance (Sleep Hygiene), behaviour modifications, as well as First-Line and Adjunct treatment options.

We will also give some information on dental appliances that may help.

Sleep Hygiene Advice

Sleep is an essential part of life and good sleep is integral in a healthy lifestyle. It is important for both physical and mental health.

Almost everybody will experience difficulty in sleeping at some point in their lives. Sleep problems are common, and it can be upsetting not getting a regular good night's sleep. With the advice below we hope that we can help you to find a routine to aid in getting you to sleep.

How much sleep do I need?

This is not set in stone, but most healthy adults will need at least 7 hours of sleep. Infants, young children and teenagers should get more. Older adults need less sleep.

What is sleep hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is the term used to describe healthy habits that you can practice during the day and evening to aid a good night's sleep.

How to improve your sleep hygiene and hopefully your sleep

- Keep a regular night-time routine. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even at weekends and holidays.
- Have a suitable bedroom environment:
  - The room temperature is comfortable: between 15 to 19ºC
  - The room is dark; thick curtains, blackout curtains or blinds may help
  - The room is quiet.
- Only use the bedroom for sleep and sex to ensure that your body associates the bedroom with rest. Unlike other forms of physical activity, sex makes us sleepy.
- Try to go to bed when you feel tired
- Undertake regular exercise each day, preferably in the morning, or at least 4 hours before going to bed. Try doing relaxation exercises before bed e.g. Yoga.
- Try to relax and unwind in the hour before going to sleep. Warm bath, massage or the use of mindfulness apps.
- Try to get regular exposure to natural light, especially in the morning or early afternoon.

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- Do get up if you cannot get to sleep within 30 minutes of trying to sleep. Leave the bedroom, have a warm drink and try a non-stimulating activity, i.e. reading in a dim light. Go back to bed when you feel sleepy.
- Avoid caffeine, coffee, tea or chocolate in the evening. (caffeine can stay in the body for 6 hours).
- Avoid drinking alcohol in the evening or use it to try to get to sleep. It will decrease overall sleep quality.
- Do not smoke/vape before bed. Nicotine is a stimulant.
- Do not use electronic devices immediately before bed. Blue light produced by devices disrupts sleep patterns and can stimulate the brain hours after use.
- Try to avoid watching T.V. or reading in bed.
- Do not go to bed too hungry or too full. Avoid foods that can disrupt sleep just before bed i.e. heavy or rich foods, fatty or fried meals, spicy dishes, citrus fruit and carbonated drinks, as they can trigger indigestion and heartburn.
- Avoid taking daytime naps and sleeping in front of the TV on an evening. This may adversely reset your body clock.

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Useful websites and information:

- www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep
- www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/getting-a-goodnights-sleep
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/publications/how-sleep-better
- www.aasm.org/resourses/pdf/products/howtosleepbetterwb.pdf
- www.sleepeducation.org/healthy-sleep/healthy-sleep-habits

www.headspace.com/sleep/sleep-hygiene

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Behavioural Changes

Weight

A BMI or weight above the ideal is the most important factor leading to snoring, so it is best to try to find out your optimal weight and try to achieve it. This is best discussed with your GP. This alone with the associated health benefits can lead to a gradual reduction in snoring.

Smoking

Stop or reduce smoking. Smoking can cause irritation to the nasal passages and thickening of the associated tissue of the upper airway.

Alcohol

Alcohol makes snoring worse, by relaxing the muscles of the airway so the tissues become looser. This can lead to elevated vibration of the tissue increasing the snoring. Alcohol can lead to restless sleep so increasing daytime tiredness.

Self Help Advice for Snoring

Gadgets/First line treatments

There are a wide and varied number of gadgets/ first line treatments available especially online, some of these may work for certain individuals but there is no overwhelming clinical evidence.

Nasal Strips: these are adhesive plastic strips placed on the bridge of the nose to try and open the airway. Before buying an easy way to test whether they may work is by placing your fingers either side of the nostrils and pushing up and out. Examples of the nasal strips are **Breath Right©** and **InstaClear©.**

Nasal Dilator Inserts: these are small plastic devices that are placed in the nostrils which may open the nasal airway. Examples include **Mute©** and **Nosevent©**.

Mouth Closure Strips And Gel: These are either adhesive strips or gel that are placed over or on the lips to prevent the mouth from opening during sleep. Examples include **Snore Clam Strips©** and **SleepQ+©**

Sprays: These include decongestant sprays and sprays for the throat to lubricate the palate. Examples include **Sterimar©** and **Snoreze©**

Pillows: certain pillow may help by keeping the head and neck in the best position to stop the airway from closing

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Adjunctive treatments for snoring

Sleeping Position(positional therapy)

Research indicates that most individuals who snore tend to do so when sleeping on their backs. This issue can be mitigated by adopting a side-sleeping position, specifically the recovery position (as outlined in first aid guidelines), where one lies on their side with bent legs. To further prevent rolling onto the back, placing a pillow between the legs may be helpful. There are also specially designed full-length pillows available. Additionally, some practical home solutions include sewing a tennis ball into the back of a t-shirt worn at night or wearing a bra backward with two tennis balls inserted to discourage back-sleeping.

Electronical Positional Devices: these are commercially available devices that try to maintain side sleep position by use of warning sounds or electrical impulses. **Night Shift©**

Myofunctional therapy

This involves strengthening and retraining muscles (tongue, soft palate, and throat), promoting nasal breathing and improving tongue posture, leading to minimize airway collapse and reduce snoring. This can be done simply by taking up **Singing** or playing the **Didgeridoo** or by undertaking various **Myofunctional exercises**. We would advise that the exercises are best performed under the guidance of a trained therapist