

Sleep --as Critical to Life as Breath

Snoring is more than a nuisance; it can be life threatening. Fear no more -- Dentistry can help!



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Starting every day with a good night's sleep is one of the most important things we can do for our overall health, along with maintaining a balanced diet and exercise. We also know that restful sleep helps to slow the aging process. Sleep deprivation not only accelerates aging, it also creates dangerous, often life-threatening situations and very significant problems in our society. While a good night's sleep is essential to looking good, feeling good, and staying safe -- an estimated 70% of Americans are chronically sleep-deprived.

During sleep, our hormones move toward equilibrium, our immune system is supported, and all of our bodily systems are repaired, restored and revitalized. A good night's sleep is just plain critical for good health. In the words of Sleep Physician, Dr. Frank Lipman, "We simply weren't built to just go, go, go. We were built to go, go, go and then rest, rest, rest."

Even when we do get enough sleep, the quality of sleep is seriously lacking for most of us, due to a variety of medical, emotional and physiologic issues. Changes in sleep patterns seem to be synonymous with the aging process, with sleep quality decreasing over time. We tend to have a harder time falling asleep and more trouble staying asleep. Sleep disorders such as snoring and sleep apnea, (when one stops breathing while sleeping), significantly increase with age. Snoring can lead to sleep apnea and is linked to many serious and often life-threatening degenerative disorders, mood disturbances and serious accidents. Over the age of 40, 60% of men have sleep apnea, and 40% of women have sleep apnea. Alarmingly, 85% of those with sleep apnea are undiagnosed, according to research published by Simmons, May 2010. And of those diagnosed, over 50% are not being treated for this life-threatening disorder.

Michael Twery, Director of the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research, (part of NIH), stated "Sleep apnea is a condition that erodes your health over time." Even snoring is associated with breakdown throughout the body. Neither is to be taken lightly. Most of us know someone who "died in their sleep." A common cause for this tragedy is sleep apnea.



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Although snoring is more of an annoyance to our loved ones, if we snore, there is a 50% chance we already have obstructive sleep apnea. We can stop breathing multiple, sometimes hundreds of times, during the night. Some of us will stop breathing for longer than two minutes at a time, many times an hour. We are not aware of this when it happens, but it results in us feeling sleepy and fatigued during our days. With sleep apnea, we are simply suffocating on and off, all night long.

If untreated, sleep apnea can cut our lifespan by up to 20 years. Just imagine - when the breathing stops, the cells in every organ of the body are deprived of life-sustaining oxygen. Deterioration is inevitable.

Yes, dentists can treat snoring and sleep apnea!

Treatments for snoring and sleep apnea are increasingly available from dentists, more and more of whom are seeking training in the physiology and treatment of these conditions. A custom-fitted oral device, made by a skilled dentist, can be highly effective in eliminating snoring. Such a device can also be the first line of defense for mild to moderate sleep apnea, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

For patients with more advanced levels of sleep apnea, a "CPAP," or breathing machine, is often the first approach to treatment. For these patients, a CPAP machine can be a literal lifesaver. However, research shows that at least half of those who should be using a CPAP machine at night, are not, possibly due to the fact that CPAP devices --consisting of a face or nose mask, straps and a hose, all hooked up to an oxygen machine--can be uncomfortable, claustrophobic, and embarrassing. For people with more serious sleep apnea who can't tolerate a CPAP machine, oral devices fitted by dentists can provide an alternative treatment option. These oral appliances are custom-fitted over the teeth and gently shift the lower jaw forward, moving the tongue out of the throat and allowing air to freely flow between the mouth, nose and lungs. An oral appliance can be life-enhancing, even life-saving, for those with sleep apnea who cannot or will not wear a CPAP machine.

A CPAP Machine



VS



A Small Custom-fitted Oral Appliance



When we sleep, the muscles in the back of the throat become softer and relaxed. Air cannot flow freely about the mouth, nose and lungs. Snoring and sleep apnea are most commonly caused by the tongue falling back in the throat, causing vibration while partially or fully blocking the exchange of air in and out of the nose and mouth.

Sleep apnea can seriously effect quality of life and life itself.

Causes and Effects of Sleep apnea:

heart attack, stroke, diabetes, obesity and cancers. Sleep apnea also contributes to dementia and Alzheimer's disease, depression, mood swings, irritability, erectile dysfunction, low libido, chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia

If you have sleep apnea, you are:

- *7 x more likely to have a motor vehicle accident
- *4 x as likely to have a heart attack
- *2-3 x more likely to have a stroke
- *2 x more likely to have diabetes
- *2 x as likely to die in your sleep

-Gale Skousen, MD

SNORING IS NEVER SEXY!

If you're snoring at night and exhausted during the day, sleep apnea may be to blame.

Call or Click today, for a FREE consultation.

Limited to the first 10 to call - A \$127 Value

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