

Snoring: Social nuisance or something more serious?



Snoring is the result of changes in the flow of air whilst breathing during sleep. It can occur if there is any narrowing of the airway in the nose, mouth or throat. Snoring affects up to a third of the population and although generally thought of as a problem that affects middle-aged men, it can occur in younger men and women. Obesity, alcohol consumption, smoking and body posture are all factors that can contribute to snoring.

Snoring is often just considered a social nuisance but as it forms part of a spectrum of sleep disordered breathing problems, it could be an indicator of more serious health problems. People who snore and also suffer with excessive daytime tiredness may have a problem known as Upper Airways Resistance Syndrome (UARS) or Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA).

An overnight sleep study is a useful test to help confirm the diagnosis. This test measures periods during sleep where the oxygen levels in the blood can dip down below normal. In OSA, blood oxygen levels will dip down whereas with UARS they will not.

People with significant OSA often require treatment with a form of therapy known as CPAP.

People who do not have significant OSA may benefit from other treatments. A diagnostic technique performed by an ENT surgeon called sleep nasal-endoscopy may be able to identify the anatomical cause of snoring. Once the cause is determined, a bespoke treatment can be offered which may be surgery or an alternative non-surgical treatment such as an oral splint to be worn while sleeping. When treatment is tailored to the individual's anatomy, excellent results in reducing snoring and improving sleep quality can be achieved.

If you are concerned that you or a family member may have a problem with snoring you may wish to seek advice from Mr Sam Khemani, an ENT specialist based at North Downs Hospital.

To book an appointment ring **01883 337440/442** or enquire online **www.northdownshospital.co.uk**



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