

Snoring

General Information

Snoring is caused by a vibration of tissues in your throat from air passing through as you breath in. This occurs because the airway is not fully open, and air is forced through a narrow passage. This causes a blockage of the airway. The tissues then vibrate, making a snoring sound.

The loudness of the snore is affected by how much air is going through the passage. The smaller the passage is, the harder it is to breath in air, and the snoring becomes louder.

About 10 to 30 percent of all adults snore. Most people do not have a medical condition causing their snoring. But, about 5 out of 100 people may have a life-threatening disorder called obstructive sleep apnea (your breathing stops or gets very shallow while you are sleeping).

Those at Risk for Snoring

Snoring is common in adults. People at a higher risk are males with large necks and those who are overweight. People who drink alcohol before bedtime may snore more than usual.

Snoring is sometimes caused by an illness like a common cold, sinus infection or obstructive sleep apnea.

How to Prevent or Reduce Snoring

The following can help prevent or reduce snoring:

- Sleep on your side. This helps prevent the tissues in your throat from covering the airway.
- Lose weight. This helps reduce the fatty deposits in the throat, opening the airway.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before sleeping. Alcohol is harmful because it relaxes the muscles in the airway.
- Avoid smoking. Cigarettes may cause nasal congestion, which can result in snoring.

For more treatment options, talk to your health care provider about your specific snoring problem.