

FitFacts®

Snoring

DOES SNORING KEEP YOU (OR YOUR PARTNER) FROM GETTING QUALITY, RESTFUL SLEEP? READ ON TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SNORING AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO GET YOUR ZZZZZS BACK.

WHY DO PEOPLE SNORE?

During sleep, your tongue and throat muscles relax, which makes the walls of your throat narrow in and vibrate when you breathe. The result is the rough, rattling noise of snoring.

Snoring gets louder as the throat becomes more relaxed and narrow. In some cases, the walls of the throat completely collapse during sleep and you stop breathing. This is a serious medical condition called [obstructive sleep apnea \(OSA\)](#).

What will happen to me if I snore?

Other than having an irritated bed partner, snoring on its own is not a serious problem. It is concerning, though, when you have periods of apnea (not breathing) because your body doesn't get the oxygen it needs to function. This leaves you feeling very tired and increases your risk for heart attack and stroke!

When should I seek medical attention?

If you experience any of the following symptoms, you should talk to your doctor immediately about being tested for OSA.

- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Morning headaches
- Recent weight gain
- Waking up in the morning feeling unrefreshed
- Waking up at night choking, gasping, or feeling confused
- Decreased concentration, attention span, and memory
- Another person observes that you stop breathing during sleep

If OSA is detected and treated early on, you have a much lower risk for serious health problems.

Treatment for OSA typically involves the use of CPAP (Continuous Positive Air Pressure). CPAP uses a mask or nosepiece that pushes room air into the throat to keep it from collapsing during sleep. Many sizes and styles of CPAP devices are available to help you sleep most comfortably.

What can I do to stop snoring? Men and older people snore the most. Unfortunately, you can't change your gender and you can't stop getting older! There is hope, though. Whether you have OSA or are just a regular snorer, here are some things you can do to decrease your snoring:

- **Lose weight.** *Being overweight or obese is the #1 risk factor for snoring and OSA.* Extra body weight (especially around the neck area) puts more



pressure on the throat muscles, which makes them more collapsible during sleeping. Focus on slow, steady [weight loss](#) through a healthy diet and exercise.

- **Try side-sleeping.** Snoring is worse for back-sleepers.
- **Decrease inflammation in your nose and throat** during allergy flare-ups or colds. Ask your pharmacist or provider for medication recommendations.
- **Avoid alcohol and certain medications before bedtime.** Alcohol, muscle relaxers, antihistamines, and sleeping pills make snoring worse.
- **Avoid large meals or snacks within 3 hours of bedtime.**
- **Discuss your snoring problem with your health care provider and/or dentist.** A physical defect (such as enlarged tonsils or nasal polyps) may be causing you to snore. Surgery or special appliances for your mouth or nose may be recommended.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[American Council on Exercise](#)

[National Sleep Foundation](#)