

# Snoring



In some cases, snoring is a sign of a serious health problem: sleep apnea. In other cases, it impairs your partner's quality of life. This fact sheet tells you what to do if you snore.

## Why do I snore?

That depends on the type of snoring.

### > Simple snoring

This type comes from the soft tissues of the throat (see diagrams below). During sleep, they vibrate when you inhale. This can produce a very loud noise. This type of snoring isn't a concern if it doesn't interfere with your sleep and your daytime activities.

On the other hand, it can greatly disturb your partner and harm your life as a couple. Simple snoring occurs in 4 out of 10 people. The older you get, the more likely you are to snore. Snoring is also more common in men than in women.

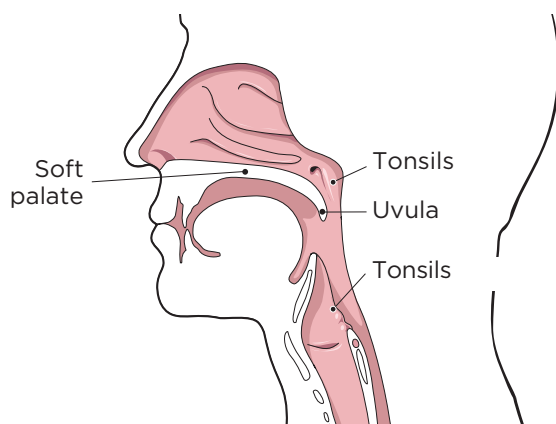
### > Sleep apnea snoring

Snoring can also be a sign of a more serious problem: sleep apnea. This disease causes you to stop breathing while you sleep. It must be treated because it can cause:

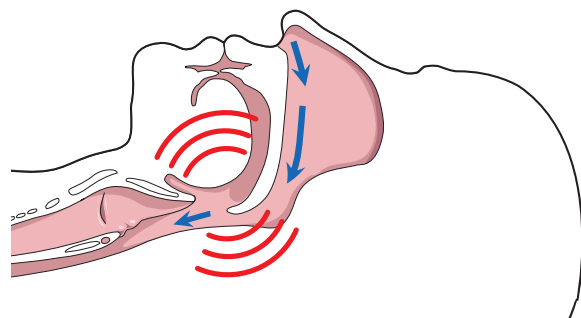
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- heart disease (cardiovascular diseases)
- diabetes
- symptoms of depression
- anxiety
- impaired quality of life

For more information, see the [Sleep apnea](#) fact sheet.

The soft tissues of the throat



Snoring



As the air passes through the throat, it makes the soft tissue vibrate, causing snoring.

## What causes snoring?

There are many causes. Here are the main ones:

- > Family history of snoring
- > Blocked nose, for different reasons (sinusitis, allergies, malformed nasal passages)
- > Sleeping on your back



- > Long uvula, distended soft palate, thick tongue base
- > Large tonsils
- > Small recessed chin (retrognathia)
- > Overweight and obesity
- > Alcohol consumption
- > Lack of sleep
- > Sleep medication
- > Menopause

## What should I watch out for?

If you snore, you may not realize it. It is often the partner who notices this.

In the case of simple snoring, you might sometimes have a sore throat when you wake up. But you won't complain that you didn't sleep well. You also won't feel sleepy during the day (drowsiness).

If the snoring is due to sleep apnea, you could have other signs. You can find out about these in the sleep apnea fact sheet. It also has a test to see if you are too sleepy during the day.

If you or your partner think you may have sleep apnea, if you're unsure, or if your snoring is bothering you or your partner, you should consult a professional.

It is important that your partner comes to your medical appointment with you. He or she can answer the following questions from your doctor:

- > Do you snore especially when you sleep on your back (positional snoring)?
- > Do you snore every night or just once in a while?
- > Do you seem to stop breathing at times during the night?

The answers to these questions will help your doctor determine if you have sleep apnea. If you do, he will decide with you on the best treatment.



A positive air pressure device can help people with sleep apnea breathe at night.



### CAUTION

Even people who don't snore can have sleep apnea.

## How can I reduce simple snoring?

There are several ways to reduce snoring. Here are the main ones.

### NASAL HYGIENE

Having a stuffy nose forces you to breathe through your mouth, which can lead to snoring. Here are some tips to reduce the risk of stuffy noses.

- > Control your allergies by avoiding what triggers them or by taking medication to relieve them.
- > Make the air in your room more humid with a humidifier.
- > Rinse your nose with a saline hydration liquid (Sinus Rinse or equivalent).
- > Try using nasal strips (such as Breathe Right).
- > Nose drops may also be helpful. Ask your doctor for more information.



- > In some cases, wearing a device at night to position your jaw forward or having an operation can be helpful. Talk to your doctor.



Device to position the jaw forward.

## What can my partner do?

To sleep better, your partner can:

### SLEEP HYGIENE

- > Don't sleep on your back if it makes your snoring worse.
- > Use a belt that stops you from sleeping on your back (positional belt) or an extra pillow to keep your head higher.
- > Don't smoke. That irritates the throat.
- > Don't drink alcohol, especially in the evening.
- > If possible, don't use muscle relaxants and sleep medications.
- > Maintain a healthy weight.
- > Do physical activities.
- > Reduce or eliminate coffee and heavy meals in the evening.

- > Try wearing ear plugs (foam or wax).
- > Go to sleep before you. Figure out with you whether you can sleep in separate rooms.
- > Try relaxing. Thinking about a partner's snoring all the time only creates more stress. If necessary, he or she can try yoga or meditation to learn to relax.
- > Discuss this with a doctor. Sleep problems may be due to the partner's snoring but could also have other causes (stress at work, anxiety, poor lifestyle habits).



## Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

CHUM Sleep Laboratory

Office: Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

> **514 890-8238**

Requests for consultations must be sent by mail to:

> **Sleep Laboratory**

**C Pavilion, 12<sup>th</sup> floor, Room C.12.6342.1  
1100, rue Sanguinet, Montreal, QC  
H2X 0C1**

or by fax to:

> **514 412-7178**



## NOTEPAD



### Questions




### Resource people and contacts




## USEFUL RESOURCES

*Dormir - le sommeil raconté*, Pierre Mayer, Éditions Pierre Tisseyre, 2012

*Vaincre les ennemis du sommeil*, Charles Morin, Éditions de l'Homme, 2009

Quebec Lung Association (QLA):

> [pq.lung.ca](http://pq.lung.ca)

Click on Lung Health → Diseases → List of lung diseases (on left) → Sleep apnea

Canadian Sleep Society:

> [css-scs.ca](http://css-scs.ca)

National Sleep Foundation (United States):

> [sleepfoundation.org](http://sleepfoundation.org)

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our web site

[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)

*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

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