

What Snorers Should Know - *By Joel Metelits, MD*

Snorling— we all do it from time to time- but some more than others. If you are the person “accused” of snoring, you are not alone. Snoring occurs regularly in 44% of adult males and 28% of adult females, worsening with age and weight. Most snorers do not have an underlying serious medical disorder like sleep apnea, but it is crucial to note that most patients with sleep apnea do snore.

Why speak of the snorer as the “accused”? Because since snoring occurs when you are asleep, the person who is snoring is usually unaware unless they “catch” themselves snoring when they accidentally wake themselves with a loud snort. So the “accused” snorers will need to trust their accusers. The impact on a bed partner can be anything from minimal white noise to an unpleasant force driving the weary partner to another room.

What is snoring?

Snoring sounds are the result of tissue in the mouth and upper airway vibrating during breathing while sleeping. These vibrations can be effected by: a) nasal passage blockages, b)

throat anatomy issues (large tonsils and/or tongue, severe overbite, drooping roof of the mouth), c) depth of sleep: the deeper one sleeps, the greater the tendency to snore (sedating medications, alcoholic beverages and being overtired can exacerbate snoring).

What is all the fuss?

Clearly all disruptive snoring can be dangerous if the bed partner goes ballistic! But snoring is serious if it reflects poor breathing and sleep quality. Since the purpose of sleep is to recharge one’s brain and repair the body’s daily wear and tear, then snoring can reflect a failure to properly perform these functions, leaving the snorer tired during the day. Sleep apnea probably contributes to the onset and control of diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol abnormalities, worsening of obesity, smoking, and mood. A person with treatable sleep apnea has a four-fold increased rate of death compared to a person without sleep apnea. If you are “accused” of snoring and live tired, make sure to tell your doctor.

Future articles:

What exactly is sleep apnea? How can I fix my sleep?

Health Coverage

Key During Open Enrollment

If you work for a company that offers health insurance or are Medicare eligible, November is likely your annual open-enrollment period. This means that it’s your time to apply for new coverage or modify existing coverage.

Thunderbird Internal Medicine encourages all patients to take advantage of this period to make the best decision for you and your family. If you have any questions regarding managed care or Medicare plans accepted by our offices, please go to www.thunderbirdim.com or check with the Business Office weekdays at 602.564.6203.