

# Why Do You Snore?

## by Scott F. Kenward, DMD

Virtually all of us snore from time to time. In fact, it is estimated that as many as 25 percent of the world population snores regularly. For some, snoring is no more than an occasional, inconvenient habit, but chronic, heavy, loud snoring can be more serious. We all know we don't snore while we are awake, so why do we snore while asleep?

Snoring usually occurs when you naturally relax during sleep, which causes your lower jaw and tongue to drop back against the back of the throat. This forces the airway to narrow and constrict, which lowers the amount of oxygen your body can take in. Your body reacts to this by increasing your respiration, or breathing. This increased velocity of air causes the soft tissues at the back of the throat to vibrate, creating the snoring noise.

While annoying to others, simple snoring is harmless, although it may cause dry mouth or a sore throat. Heavy, loud snoring, however, is often a symptom of a serious medical condition called *obstructive sleep apnea*. Sleep apnea earns its name from the fact that, in snoring, breathing actually stops for 10 seconds to a minute or more. Sleep apnea is frequently associated with chronic fatigue, hypertension and stroke.

### **Should You Be Concerned?**

Have you been told, or do you awake and find that you're choking or gasping for air during sleep? Do you feel tired during the day, even though you got a full night's sleep? Do you wake frequently with headaches? Sore throat? Do you have high blood pressure? Do you snore loudly? Is your sleep restless? Does your sleep partner comment that your legs or arms suddenly jerk during sleep?

If you answered yes to any or all of these questions you should seek further evaluation by a sleep specialist. You may also want to take a moment to answer a short questionnaire called the Epworth Sleepiness Scale. According to clinical research published in *Sleep, The Journal of the American Sleep Disorders Association*, it has proven to be very accurate in determining whether or not a snorer may also suffer from Obstructive Sleep Apnea.

### **Treatment**

Oral appliances such as the TheraSnore are an excellent method of treatment for snoring and mild to moderate sleep apnea. The TheraSnore appliance is a small, comfortable oral mouthpiece that is worn during sleep and is fit in the dentist's office in one brief visit.

The TheraSnore prevents the tongue and mandible (lower jaw) from falling back and blocking the airway. It's simple, you get more air - you don't snore. The adjustable TheraSnore oral appliance has an effective rate of 87% in the treatment of snoring and mild to moderate sleep apnea.

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It takes only a few nights to fully adapt to wearing the TheraSnore. By the end of the week you should be sleeping quietly all night long. You'll be amazed how each morning you will awake feeling refreshed and rested.

Don't spend one more night troubled by snoring. Let your dentist show you an effective, comfortable and affordable way to stop snoring now and sleep in silent comfort.

*Dr. Kenward is a dentist at 12651 South Dixie Highway in Pinecrest. His focus is on cosmetic and preventive dentistry. For more information call 305-255-7722.*