

# Stop the snoring

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Tips to help you prevent or 'quiet' the snoring.

AS many as half of adults sometimes snore. Snoring occurs when air flows past relaxed tissues in the throat, causing the tissues to vibrate as you breathe, which creates those irritating sounds.

Sometimes snoring may indicate a serious health condition.

In addition, snoring can be a nuisance to your partner.

Lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, avoiding alcohol close to bedtime or sleeping on your side, can help stop snoring.

In addition, medical devices and surgery are available that may reduce disruptive snoring. However, these aren't suitable or necessary for everyone who snores.

Snoring is often associated with a sleep disorder called obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). Not all snorers have OSA, but if snoring is accompanied by any of the following symptoms, it may be an indication to see a doctor for further evaluation for OSA:

- Noise during sleep
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Morning headaches
- Sore throat
- Restless sleep
- Gasping or choking at night
- High blood pressure
- Chest pain at night
- Your snoring is so loud it's disrupting your partner's sleep
- You wake up choking or gasping

ing.  
To prevent or quiet snoring, try these tips:

- If you're overweight, lose weight. People who are overweight may have extra tissues in the throat that contribute to snoring. Losing weight can help reduce snoring.

- Sleep on your side. Lying on your back allows your tongue to fall backward into your throat, narrowing your airway and partially obstructing airflow.

Try sleeping on your side. If you find that you always end up on your back in the middle of the night, try sewing a tennis ball in the back of your pyjama top.

- Raise the head of your bed. Raising the head of your bed by about 10cm may help.

- Nasal strips or an external nasal dilator. Adhesive strips applied to the bridge of the nose help many people increase the area of their nasal passage, enhancing their breathing.

A nasal dilator is a stiffened adhesive strip applied externally across the nostrils that may help decrease airflow resistance so you breathe easier. Nasal strips and external nasal dilators aren't effective for people with sleep apnoea, however.

- Treat nasal congestion or obstruction. Having allergies or a deviated septum can limit airflow through your nose. This forces you



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to breathe through your mouth, increasing the likelihood of snoring.

- Don't use an oral or spray decongestant for more than three days in a row for acute congestion unless directed to do so by your doctor. Long-term use of these medications can have a rebound effect and make your congestion worse.

Ask your doctor about a prescription steroid spray if you have chronic congestion.

To correct a structural defect in your airway, such as a deviated septum, you may need surgery.

- Limit or avoid alcohol and sedatives. Avoid drinking alcoholic

beverages at least two hours before bedtime, and let your doctor know about your snoring before taking sedatives. Sedatives and alcohol depress your central nervous system, causing excessive relaxation of muscles, including the tissues in your throat.

- Quit smoking. Smoking cessation may reduce snoring, in addition to having numerous other health benefits.

- Get enough sleep. Adults should aim for at least seven to eight hours of sleep per night. The

recommended hours of sleep for children vary by age. Preschool-aged children should get 11 to 12 hours a day. School-age children

need at least 10 hours a day, and teens should have nine to 10 hours a day.

See your doctor if you have any of the above symptoms. These may indicate your snoring is caused by a more serious condition, such as obstructive sleep apnoea.

If your child snores, ask your paediatrician about it.

Children can have obstructive sleep apnoea too.

Nose and throat problems – such as enlarged tonsils – and obesity often can narrow a child's airway, which can lead to your child developing sleep apnoea. – Mayo Clinic News Network/Tribune News Service