

Snoring



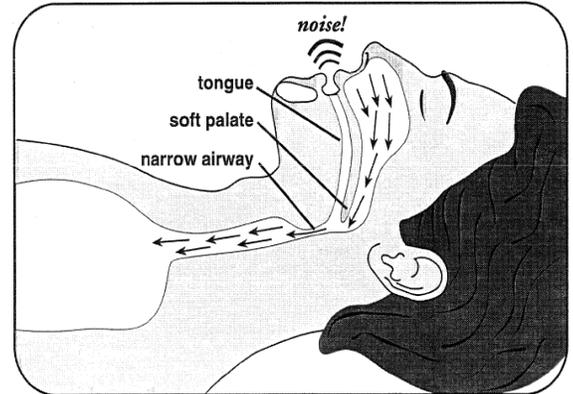
Snoring is a noise made by vibration of the soft palate and other soft tissue due to narrowing in the throat while breathing when asleep. This happens because the muscles controlling the soft palate and tongue relax too much and narrow the airway to the lungs. The breathing muscles then have to work much harder than normal to get air into the lungs.

Some people snore all the time, while others only under particular conditions such as when they have consumed alcohol or are sleeping on

their back. By identifying the situations when your snoring is worse you can help avoid these risk factors and minimise snoring.

Snoring is not generally considered a health risk but because sleep during snoring is not as relaxed and comfortable the person may feel less refreshed in the morning and more tired during the day.

The vibration of snoring can also irritate the airway, and create a dry or irritated mouth and throat on waking. Snoring can also be socially disruptive and damaging to relationships.



If these muscles relax the airway becomes narrower, which causes snoring and breathing difficulties.

Frequently Asked Questions

“Are there any treatments for snoring?”

There are many treatments and cures on offer for snoring. Some work well for many people, while others may only work for a few individuals. Common treatments include:

- **Oral Appliances** – mouth splints, tongue stabilizing devices, and chin straps are all commonly available, both as “over the counter” products and more specialised and custom built options from dental and oral specialists.
- **Surgical procedures** are also available, and usually target localized areas of airway collapse. Again these range from relatively simple family doctor based procedures to specialist referral airway surgeries.
- Not all snorers are overweight, but many are. We absolutely recommend **weight loss** if you are a snorer and are overweight or obese – [see below for more information](#).
- **Positional therapy** can be effective if your snoring is worse in in some positions. Wearing your PJ top backwards with a tennis ball in the breast pocket is an easy and cost effective way to try positional therapy out – more elegant solutions are available, particularly from the internet, but homegrown methods can work just as well.
- Many **other snoring treatments** exist include special pillows, nasal and nasal bridge splints, oral sprays, alternative medicine therapies, and more. We recommend considering therapies carefully and remind you not everything on the internet is true!

“What can I do to help my sleep right now?”

- We advocate healthy sleep habits (called “**sleep hygiene**”) for everyone, whether you have sleep concerns or not. [Our Sleep Hygiene tips](#) are available on Healthpoint.
- Holding any NZ driver’s license is dependent on being medically safe to drive. **Being excessively sleepy means you may not be safe to drive**, and drivers are responsible for only driving when safe to do so. [Drowsy driver tips](#) are available on Healthpoint, and if you have concerns about your safety to drive do talk to your family doctor.
- **We generally sleep better when we’re in good health.** Leading a healthy, balanced lifestyle can improve our sleep, and making sure we eat well and exercise regularly can have a positive effect on how well we sleep. **If you are carrying extra weight** we strongly recommend you consider weight loss. If you are unsure where to start ask your family doctor about the [Green Prescription](#) initiative, or find out more at:

<http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-and-physical-activity/green-prescriptions>

