

Snoring and Sleep Apnea

- * Recognizing When There's a Problem
 - * What Causes Snoring?
 - * What is Obstructive Sleep Apnea?

Although snoring and sleep apnea may seem to be minor annoyances, snoring and other sleep disorders can have a big impact on your health. Snoring can also be a sign of a more serious problem, such as obstructive sleep apnea. Dr. Murphy will perform a complete examination and may recommend an overnight sleep test to evaluate your snoring and breathing patterns.

Our sleep services include comprehensive evaluation & treatment of these problems.

RECOGNIZING WHEN THERE'S A PROBLEM....

If you experience one or more of the following symptoms, call Summit ENT Associates for a complete evaluation.

- # Chronic tiredness and fatigue - never feeling rested even after a full night of sleep
- # Falling asleep at the wheel or in meetings
- # Morning headaches
- # Snoring and/or prolonged gaps in the pattern of your breathing while sleeping

WHAT CAUSES SNORING?

Snoring occurs when floppy tissue in the airway relaxes during sleep and vibrates. Most snoring is caused by an enlarged soft palate and uvula at the back of the mouth, although the tongue, tonsils, adenoids and congested nasal passages can also contribute to the sound. The level of snoring can be aggravated by excess weight, alcohol intake, sleeping pills, smoking and poor sleep quality.

For simple snoring (those who don't have sleep apnea), there is a minimally invasive, minimal-downtime procedure available in our office that has shown very good results in patients with favorable anatomy. Called Pillar implants for the soft palate, it is done using a local anesthetic in the office. You can drive yourself to the office after work, have the procedure done, drive yourself home, and be back at work bright and early the next morning. Some patients may also need to have a portion of the soft palate removed at the same time using our in-clinic laser. If this is necessary, there is a bit more downtime from normal activities.

WHAT IS OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA?

When loud snoring is interrupted by frequent episodes of totally obstructed breathing, it is known as obstructive sleep apnea. Serious episodes last more than ten seconds each and occur more than seven times per hour. Apnea patients may experience 30 to 300 such events per night. These episodes can reduce blood oxygen levels, causing the heart to pump harder. The immediate effect of sleep apnea is daytime fatigue. In order to keep you breathing, your brain never lets you get into the deeper stages of sleep, where most of our true rest occurs. Because the snorer does not get a good night's rest, he or she may be sleepy during the day, which impairs job performance and often makes it dangerous to drive. After many years with this disorder, elevated blood pressure and heart enlargement may occur.

