

Snoring Sounds Alarm for Deeper Health Problems

Many people in Eugene realize that snoring affects their ability to get a quality night's sleep, but most don't know it could signal other serious health problems.

While snoring can simply be a sign that the airway is partially blocked, loud and frequent snoring can indicate the presence of obstructive sleep apnea. At least 12 to 18 million U.S. adults are affected by this condition, which causes breathing to suddenly stop during sleep anywhere from 10 seconds to more than a minute, in some cases. It occurs when the tongue and soft palate collapse onto the back of the throat, blocking the upper airway.

Numerous studies have shown that, if left untreated, obstructive sleep apnea is a potentially life-threatening condition that can increase the risk for serious health problems from congestive heart failure, stroke, high blood pressure and heart disease to diabetes, obesity, depression and impotence.

Fortunately, there are many treatment options available for those suffering from this condition. If your snoring can wake sleepers down the hall, or if you suspect it is impacting your overall health, take these steps:

1. **See a sleep physician and get a sleep test.** This will determine if your snoring is indicative of a more severe problem, such as obstructive sleep apnea, and will help you plot your treatment course. For a listing of sleep centers in the Eugene area, go to www.sleepeducation.com/find-a-center.
2. **Consider a range of treatments.** CPAP, or continuous positive airway pressure, is the recommended treatment for sleep apnea. CPAP includes a face mask that must be worn during sleep, as well as tubing and a constantly running motor. For patients who cannot tolerate CPAP or choose not to use that treatment, I recommend oral appliance therapy. Provided by select dentists, like myself, who have expertise in dental sleep medicine, this treatment uses a custom-fit device, similar to a mouth guard, to either hold the tongue in place or support the jaw in a forward position. The oral appliance keeps the patient's airway open and provides a more refreshing night of sleep. For a consultation at my office, you can call (541)341-1404— or visit www.localsleepdentist.com to find a complete listing of dentists who specialize in oral appliance therapy.
3. **Stick to your treatment plan.** Symptoms – and quality of life – can improve dramatically for patients who remain committed to their treatment and abide by it nightly. Choose a treatment you can sleep with to put yourself on the road to more restful nights and healthier days.

Loud and frequent snoring is not just a nighttime annoyance; it is often a red flag for larger health problems. Understanding the impact of snoring on health, and the treatment options available, helps snorers make smarter, healthier lifestyle choices that are sure to positively impact them and their families for the long term.

About Dr. Mercedes R. Del Valle

Dr. Mercedes R. Del Valle is a member of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine. <https://mercedesdelvalle.com/>. Patients with loud snoring and diagnosed sleep apnea sufferers with difficulty tolerating CPAP should contact Dr. Mercedes R. Del Valle at (541)341-1404 to schedule a consultation appointment. Dr. Mercedes R. Del Valle works closely with sleep physicians to treat snoring and obstructive sleep apnea.

About The American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine

The American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSM) is the only non-profit national professional society dedicated exclusively to the practice of dental sleep medicine. The AADSM provides educational resources for dentists and promotes the use of oral appliance therapy for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea and sleep-disordered breathing. Established in 1991, the AADSM has nearly 3,000 member dentists worldwide. Visit www.aadsm.org or call the national office at (630) 737-9705 for more information.