

For Better or for Snoring

"We are gathered here today to join this couple in holy matrimony."

You have fond memories of your wedding day, but would you have said "I do" as zealously had you known your soon-to-be husband/wife was a snorer?



By Dr. Jean-Jacques Dugoua, ND

Snoring is a common sleeping disorder that disrupts sleep and in many cases, disrupts the sleep of anyone who is in the same room (or even the same house). Forty-five percent of adults snore at least occasionally, and 25% are habitual snorers. Snoring is usually a harmless condition, but in some cases it may be a warning that the sleeper is at risk of a more serious sleeping disorder, such as sleep apnea. Snoring and, in particular, sleep apnea, are associated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity.

We know that snoring and sleep apnea is bad for the health of the snorer, but what about the person lying next to them? Until recently, very little attention has been paid to the effects of snoring on the bed partners of patients who snore or have sleep apnea. If your partner is not sleeping well, all areas of his/her life will be affected. Work, school, leisure, home and even your relationship may suffer if you and your bed partner are not getting a restful sleep.

Recent studies

A study was conducted at the Division of Pulmonary Medicine of the Mayo Clinic in Arizona on the effects of sleep apnea on the bed partners. Fifty four patients with sleep apnea and their bed partners were evaluated on their sleep quality. The patients with sleep apnea were treated using CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) therapy for six weeks.

The researchers observed an improvement in the patients with sleep apnea, and also in their bed partners. Bed partners reported that their quality of sleep improved and that the following aspects of their lives also improved: physical health, vitality, social functioning and mental health.

I don't snore...do I?

You may be a snorer and not even realize it. The following are symptoms of snoring:

- Loud, fluttery sounds during sleep: Usually noticed by others sharing the bed or room, but sometimes loud enough to wake the sleeper.
- Dry mouth: Caused by sleeping with an open mouth.
- Sore throat: Caused by sleeping with an open mouth and the strain of snoring.
- Morning headaches: Caused by improper intake of oxygen.
- Morning grogginess and occasional daytime sleepiness: Caused by disturbed sleep.

If you have any of the above-mentioned symptoms, you may want to ask your bed partner if you snore. Your bed partner may be too shy or doesn't wish to hurt your feelings by not telling you that you snore. Take the initiative and treat your snoring today.