

• The London Road Clinic •

Snoring and Sleep disorders

Q How many people snore?

A More than you might think. Between the ages of 30 and 35, a fifth of men snore whilst only 5% of women snore. The figures get much higher as we get older however and by the age of 60 the majority of men snore (60%) and 40% of women snore.

Q Is it mainly people who are overweight who snore?

A That is the common perception but surprisingly many thin people snore and find it has a severe impact upon their daytime functioning.

Q In that case what is it that causes snoring?

A Apart from weight, features such as neck size, lifestyle (smoking, alcohol) and the shape of the airway all affect snoring patterns. Don't forget that any point from the tip of the nose down to the windpipe can cause snoring if its narrow enough. That's why at The London Road Clinic we advise all patients undergo airway endoscopy as part of their sleep studies as looking at the airway may identify a problem which requires surgery.

Q If I lose weight will that stop the snoring?

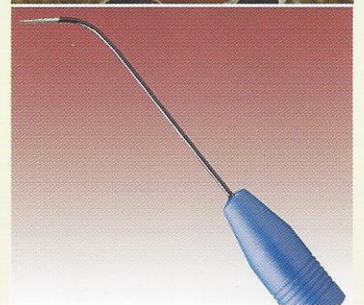
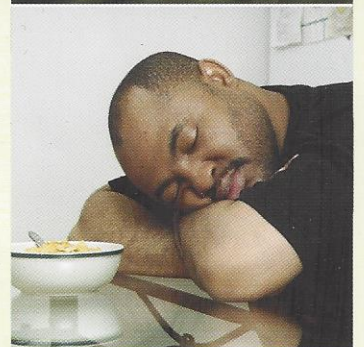
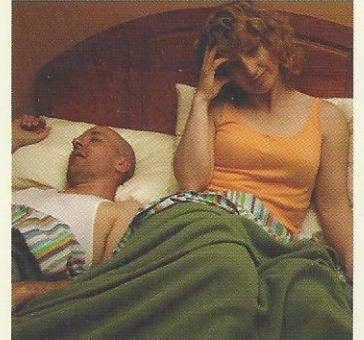
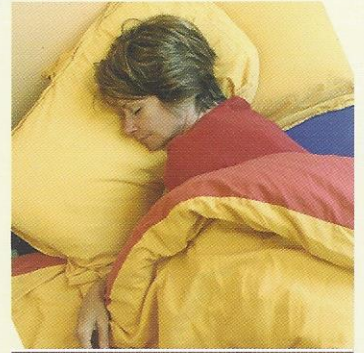
A Studies have shown that in people who are severely overweight a drastic reduction in weight does lead to improved breathing at night and a reduction in obstructive sleep apnoea.

Q What is Obstructive Sleep Apnoea?

A There is a range of snoring, which goes from the very mild occasional snorer through to the worst – the snorer with Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA). OSA occurs when you stop breathing completely for 10 seconds or more when asleep. Most people with OSA do this more than once during a nights sleep. This usually means that the airway has completely collapsed and until the brain starts waking up no air moves. Quite often, the partners of snorers will describe this as very frightening and need to jostle their partners to start them breathing again.

Q Are there things that will make my snoring worse?

A Alcohol, extreme tiredness, sleeping on your back, and smoking can all make snoring worse.



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Q How do I know if my snoring is a problem?

A There are some obvious features of snoring which present problems such as a partner or other family member complaining about the noise. In some instances this is enough to cause couples to sleep in separate rooms. In addition to the stress this places on relationships there are also health issues. Snoring may not be severe enough to cause Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (see previous page) but it can lead to excessive daytime sleepiness due to the poor quality of sleep this produces. This can be a problem particularly for those whose job involves operating machinery or driving. Obstructive Sleep Apnoea is worse still. OSA sufferers have an increased risk of many health problems including heart attacks, strokes, headaches, sexual impotence and high blood pressure. Unfortunately it can also lead to depression, impaired intellectual function and motor vehicle accidents.

Q What can be done about snoring?

A There are simple measures that can be taken in the first instance such as cutting down on alcohol, stopping smoking and losing weight. Weight reduction can be difficult though for snorers who are already tired through lack of refreshing sleep and do not feel they have the energy to exercise and therefore eat more to try and regain their energy. There are many products on the market from chin straps to electric shock devices all of which are designed to improve snoring. Some work and some don't and invariably one size doesn't fit all. A certain amount of trial and error is therefore involved in getting a contraption to work for you and this can be expensive (not to mention uncomfortable). If the alcohol reduction, smoking cessation and weight loss are not enough it is worthwhile getting a diagnosis from a suitably qualified doctor as to

A: How bad the problem is?

B: Where the problem is?

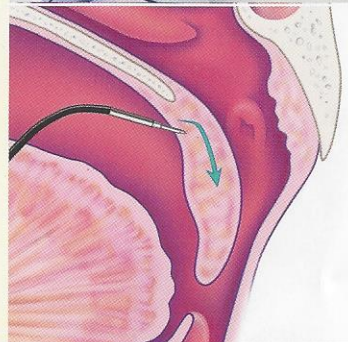
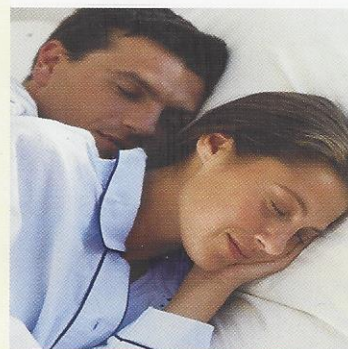
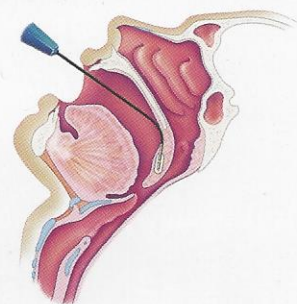
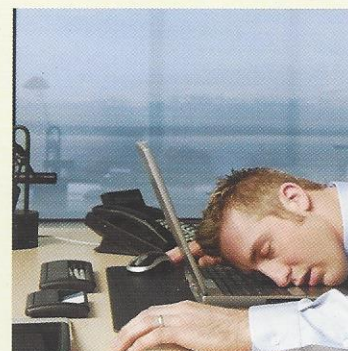
C: What needs to be done about it?

Q If I come to The London Road Clinic what will happen?

A First of all you will see a Medical Consultant who is experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders. A history of the problem will be taken together with any medical complaints which may be affecting it. You will be given a sleep disorder questionnaire to complete. Following an examination, the doctor will discuss necessary investigations with you. After the investigations you will see the doctor again who will go through the results with you. He will be able to tell you how bad (or not so bad) the problem is, what if anything needs to be done about it, and what this involves. Rather than trial and error, this system allows a much better appraisal of what the problem is and how best to treat it.

Q Can I just book in to The London Road Clinic for this?

A You can, but we prefer it if you bring or send a referral from your GP. This will then tell us of any past or ongoing medical conditions which you may forget to mention during your consultation.



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