

Stop snoring and save your sex life

BY MIRIAM STOPPARD ON MAY 26, 08 09:47 AM IN ADVICE

Up to five million couples are missing out on sex because their partner snores. In some cases, the noise can reach 90 decibels – equivalent to a train passing by. Many partners find it so unbearable they have to sleep in a separate room to get a decent night's sleep.

The number of snorers in the UK is estimated at 15 million, according to the British Snoring And Sleep Apnoea Association, and they're leaving a trail of tired and irritable people in their wake.

But snoring problems can wreak even more havoc on a partner's health. Research from Imperial College, London shows exposure to nighttime noise, whether you're awake or asleep, can raise blood pressure, increasing risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and even dementia.

Not only is the long-suffering partner affected – the snorer also pays a price. Snoring can be a sign of a condition called sleep apnoea, where breathing stops several times an hour in sleep.

If this happens, you automatically wake up as the drop in your blood oxygen rouses your body to start breathing again. But the sleep/arousal cycle is repeated during the night so you get up feeling unrefreshed and continually tired.

In fact, people with this condition are seven to 12 times more likely to crash while driving because of sleep deprivation.

It can also increase the risk of irregular heartbeat and even heart attacks.

Breathing disturbances and reduction of oxygen in the blood can lead to erectile dysfunction, too.

Sleep apnoea affects one in 20 middle-aged men and one in 50 women, especially after the menopause.

So, if you're a middle-aged snorer, why not ask your doctor to check you over?

Why do we snore?

The unmistakable noise happens when floppy tissue at the back of the throat blocks the upper air passages. Turbulent airflow creates quite violent vibrations of the soft palate, the mouth, nose and throat. It's caused by...

- Obstruction by the tongue if it drops back
- Small or collapsing nostrils
- Damage to the septum inside the nose, say from a sports injury
- Congestion caused by catarrh
- Large, floppy soft palate or uvula
- Enlarged nasal bones in the nostrils and nasal polyps

You may have sleep apnoea if...

- You snore really loudly
- Feel as though you're choking or short of breath at night
- Feel unrefreshed in the morning
- Are excessively tired all day
- Get morning headaches

It's no joke..it drove my partner into the spare room

Louise Andrews, 49, a nurse from Leyburn, North Yorks, snored for 15 years. Then she bought a snoring mouth guard – and now her partner Malcolm Crossley, 52, gets a good night's sleep.

I wasn't aware I was a snorer until Malcolm and I got together 15 years ago.

At first, he made a joke of it and used to nudge me to stop me snoring.

But the joke soon wore thin and, if Malcolm failed to drop off before me, he'd head for the spare room. If he didn't sleep alone, he'd be exhausted the next day.

Even my friends complained about my snoring. On girlie holidays they used to draw straws to see who would share my room. I was embarrassed but what could I do?

Last September, I mentioned my snoring to my dentist who suggested a Mandibular Advancement Device (MAD). This mouth guard holds the lower jaw and tongue forward, making more space to breathe and prevent snoring.

My dentist quoted me £400 but I went online and found one for £100 and on the first night it worked perfectly. I look like a bulldog with it in but I don't care because

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