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# Snoring

Snoring is very common and is not usually caused by anything serious. There are things that can help if it's a problem.

## Causes of snoring

The causes of snoring are things such as your tongue, mouth, throat or airways in your nose vibrating as you breathe.

It happens because these parts of your body relax and narrow when you're asleep.

You're more likely to snore if you:

- are overweight
- smoke
- drink too much alcohol
- sleep on your back

Sometimes the cause of snoring is a condition like sleep apnoea. This is when your airways become temporarily blocked as you sleep.

Read about [obstructive sleep apnoea](#)

## Preventing snoring

Simple lifestyle changes can help prevent or reduce snoring.

### Do

- ✓ try to lose weight if you're overweight
- ✓ sleep on your side – try taping or stitching a tennis ball to the back of your sleepwear, or buy a special pillow or bed wedge to help keep you on your side
- ✓ consider asking your partner to use earplugs if your snoring affects their sleep

## Don't

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- ✗ do not smoke
- ✗ do not drink too much alcohol
- ✗ do not take sleeping pills – these can sometimes cause snoring

## When to contact your GP

### Contact your GP if:

- lifestyle changes are not helping
- your snoring is having a big impact on your or your partner's life
- you feel sleepy during the day, or make gasping or choking noises while you sleep – you may have sleep apnoea, which can be serious if not treated

## What happens at your appointment

Your GP will look inside your mouth and nose to check for any problems that might cause your snoring.

It can help to bring someone with you to your appointment who can describe what your snoring is like, such as a partner.

Your GP may refer you to a specialist for treatment or further tests if they're not sure what the cause is.

## Treating snoring

The treatment for snoring depends on the cause. Talk to your GP or specialist about the best treatment for you.

Possible cause Tongue partially blocking the back of your throat

Treatment mandibular advancement device - a device you wear in your mouth to bring your tongue forward

Possible cause Mouth falling open when you're asleep

Treatment vestibular shield - a chin strap to hold your mouth closed, or a device you wear in your mouth to make you breathe through your nose while you sleep

Possible cause Blocked or narrow airways in your nose

Treatment nasal dilators - special devices or strips that hold your nose open while you sleep  
sprays to reduce swelling inside your nose

## Surgery for snoring

Surgery is sometimes an option to treat snoring if other treatments do not help.

But it's not widely available and it does not always work. Snoring can come back after surgery.

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