

# EAR, NOSE AND THROAT ASSOCIATES OF CHESTER COUNTY

**Alexander C. Keszeli, D.O.**      **Alfred J. Mauriello, II, M.D.**  
**Michael A. Picariello, M.D.**      **Joseph L. Smith, II, M.D.**  
**Daniella D. Benson, PA-C**  
**Nicole A. Walstein, PA-C**

## SNORING

Snoring is the sound which is produced by vibration of the tissues of the upper airway during sleep. This usually occurs as a result of relaxation of the soft palate, tongue and throat resulting in narrowing of the airway and the subsequent movement of forced air. The greater the narrowing of the airway, the more forceful the airflow becomes, and the louder the quality of the snoring.

Snoring is a relatively common condition affecting upwards of one-third of adults on an intermittent basis during sleep. Generally snoring is little more than a nuisance to your sleep partner but can be severe and strain domestic relationships. Snoring, however, may be indicative of a much more severe problem which is known as sleep apnea.

There are several factors which may contribute to snoring. If the tissues at the back of the mouth are dependent or thickened, this can narrow the airway, as can enlarged tonsils. Nasal obstruction caused by congestion or swelling, deviations of the septum and polyps may also be a factor.

Being overweight further narrows the airway principally at the base of the tongue. The sedative effects of alcohol consumption in the evening result in relaxation of the throat muscles and further contribute to snoring.

Although less common in children, snoring may be the result of enlarged tonsils, obesity, or nasal obstruction. This can result in behavioral problems, decreased academic achievement, and bedwetting. Treating these conditions will help the child sleep in a more healthy and restful fashion.

Ear, Nose and Throat physicians are specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of snoring. The physicians and physician assistants of ENTACC will obtain a careful history and perform a thorough physical examination to determine the source of snoring. This will involve a careful examination of the entire upper airway. They may also recommend that an analysis of sleep be performed at a sleep center/lab. This is referred to as a polysomnogram or sleep study.

Treatment may involve changes in lifestyle such as developing regular patterns of sleep, changing positions during sleep, avoiding alcohol and other sedatives at bedtime, and weight loss. If these are not sufficient to eliminate snoring, then surgery may be recommended. Based upon the site of obstruction, this might involve correcting the nasal airway, removing the tonsils or tightening and/or removing redundant tissues in the back of the roof of the mouth. This latter procedure is referred to as a LAUP and is performed as an office procedure under local anesthesia in the ENTACC laser suite.

As already noted, sleep apnea is a much more serious condition than simple snoring. For more information on this, please refer to "Sleep Apnea" in the Patient Education section of the ENTACC website.