Sleep Apnoea

Do you wake up feeling unrefreshed, even after a full night's sleep? Has your partner noticed that you snore loudly or stop breathing during the night? If so, you may be experiencing sleep apnoea – a common but serious condition that causes your breathing to repeatedly stop and start while you sleep.

At Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic, our expert ENT consultants are here to help you understand, diagnose and treat sleep apnoea, so you can get the restful sleep you deserve.

What Is Sleep Apnoea?

The most common type is **obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA**). This occurs when the muscles in your throat relax too much during sleep, causing your airway to narrow or close completely. Your breathing stops temporarily, often followed by gasping or choking as your body reacts. These episodes disrupt your sleep – even if you don't fully wake up – and can happen hundreds of times each night.

Symptoms Of Sleep Apnoea

You may not always be aware that your sleep is being disrupted, but symptoms can include:

- Loud, chronic snoring
- Waking up choking, gasping, or struggling to breathe
- Feeling excessively tired during the day
- Poor concentration or memory problems
- Low mood or irritability
- Morning headaches
- Disturbed or restless sleep

Causes And Risk Factors

Sleep apnoea can affect anyone, but you may be more at risk if you:

- Are overweight
- Have a large neck or small, narrow airway
- Have enlarged tonsils or adenoids
- Smoke or drink alcohol regularly
- Take sedative medications
- Have nasal congestion due to allergies or sinus issues
- Have a family history of sleep apnoea

Why It's Important To Treat Sleep Apnoea

Sleep apnoea is more than just snoring – it's a medical condition that can significantly affect your health. If left untreated, it can increase your risk of:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease and stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- Depression and anxiety
- Accidents caused by daytime sleepiness (especially driving)

How We Diagnose Sleep Apnoea

At Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic, your care starts with a detailed consultation and examination. If we suspect sleep apnoea, we'll arrange a sleep study. This may be carried out in your own home or at a specialist centre.

A sleep study monitors your breathing, oxygen levels, heart rate and movements while you sleep. It helps us confirm the diagnosis and understand how severe your sleep apnoea is.

Treatment Options

Treatment is based on how severe your symptoms are and what's causing your airway to narrow. Your personalised treatment plan might include:

- **Lifestyle changes**
  Losing weight, reducing alcohol intake, stopping smoking and avoiding sleeping on your back can all help improve mild sleep apnoea

- **CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure)**
  A CPAP machine delivers gentle air pressure through a mask to keep your airway open at night. It's the most effective treatment for moderate to severe sleep apnoea

- **Mandibular advancement device (MAD)**
  A MAD is a custom-made mouthguard worn at night. It holds your lower jaw forward to prevent airway collapse and is helpful for mild to moderate sleep apnoea

- **Surgery**

If your sleep apnoea is caused by structural problems – such as large tonsils, adenoids, or a blocked nose – surgery may be an option

What To Expect At Your Appointment

You'll be seen by a consultant ENT specialist with experience in diagnosing and treating sleep-related breathing disorders. We'll talk through your symptoms, conduct a full examination, and work with you to create a treatment plan that fits your needs.

We're committed to helping you sleep better, feel more energised and improve your long-term health.

Get In Touch

Think you might have sleep apnoea? You don't have to put up with it. With the right support, treatment can make a huge difference.

Contact Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic today to book your consultation with an expert ENT consultant.