Snoring

Do you snore at night or share a bed with someone who does? Snoring is very common – and while it's often harmless, it can sometimes be a sign of an underlying problem, especially if it disrupts your sleep or your partner's.

At Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic, we understand how snoring can affect your sleep, relationships, and overall health. Our experienced ENT specialists can help find the cause and offer effective, personalised treatments to help you – and your household – get a better night's rest.

What Is Snoring?

Snoring happens when the flow of air through your mouth and nose is partially blocked during sleep. This causes the soft tissues in the upper airway (such as the soft palate, uvula, or tongue) to vibrate, producing the familiar snoring sound.

You're more likely to snore when the airway is narrow, relaxed, or partially collapsed. This can happen due to factors like sleeping on your back, alcohol use, nasal blockage, or muscle relaxation during deep sleep.

Signs And Symptoms

Snoring can range from mild to severe and may be:

- Occasional or nightly
- Loud enough to disturb your partner or others in your home
- Worse when lying on your back or after drinking alcohol
- Associated with pauses in breathing (a possible sign of sleep apnoea)
- Accompanied by daytime tiredness or poor concentration

If you experience frequent, loud snoring or stop breathing during sleep, it's important to seek medical advice.

Causes Of Snoring

Many different factors can contribute to snoring, including:

- Nasal congestion or blockage from allergies, colds, or a deviated septum
- Enlarged tonsils or adenoids (especially in children)
- Being overweight, especially with excess neck tissue
- Alcohol or sedative use, which relax the airway muscles
- Sleeping on your back
- Smoking, which irritates and narrows the airways

- Ageing, which naturally reduces muscle tone in the throat

Is It Just Snoring – Or Something More?

While simple snoring is not usually harmful, it can sometimes be a symptom of **obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA)** – a more serious condition where breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep.

Warning signs of OSA include:

- Choking or gasping sounds during sleep
- Breathing pauses noticed by a partner
- Waking up unrefreshed or with headaches
- Feeling excessively tired during the day
- Difficulty concentrating or low mood

If you suspect OSA, it's important to be assessed by a specialist.

How We Assess Snoring

At Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic, we start with a detailed consultation to understand your symptoms, lifestyle, and any underlying health issues. Your assessment may include:

- A physical examination of your nose, throat, and neck
- A review of your sleep habits and partner observations
- Nasal endoscopy – a quick camera test to view your nasal passages and airway
- A sleep study if obstructive sleep apnoea is suspected

Treatment Options

Treatment depends on the cause of your snoring and whether you have sleep apnoea. Options include:

- **Lifestyle changes**
  Losing weight, avoiding alcohol before bed, quitting smoking, and changing sleep positions can all help.
- **Nasal treatments**
  We may recommend sprays, decongestants, or surgery to address blocked nasal passages.
- **Oral appliances**
  A custom-made **mandibular advancement device (MAD)** can help hold your jaw forward, keeping your airway open during sleep.
- **Surgery**
  In some cases, procedures to remove enlarged tonsils, adenoids, or correct nasal issues may be recommended. We'll only suggest surgery when other options haven't worked.

All treatment options are explained clearly and tailored to your needs.

What To Expect At Your Appointment

You'll be seen by an ENT specialist who will listen carefully to your concerns, perform a full examination, and discuss the best path forward. We're here to help you understand what's causing your snoring – and how to fix it.

Get In Touch

If snoring is disturbing your sleep or affecting your quality of life, don't ignore it. There are effective treatments available – and we're here to help.

Contact Birmingham Head and Neck Clinic today to arrange your consultation with a specialist ENT consultant.