

Stop snoring! ^[1]

Dear Alice,

Do you have any hints to stop snoring?

— Help

Answer

Dear Help,

Noisy nights can be disruptive to your quality of sleep (and roommates, partners, etc.). It's good to start with some basic facts: Snoring is noisy breathing through the open mouth during sleep that is produced by vibrations of the soft palate. Snoring is usually caused by conditions that interfere with breathing through the nose, such as a common cold, allergies, or enlarged adenoids. It's more common while sleeping on your back, when the lower jaw tends to drop open. The frequency and volume associated with snoring may vary, even in the same person.

As long as your health care provider determines that your snoring is not stemming from apnea (a disorder where the snorer stops breathing for seconds, or even minutes) or any other serious condition, here are some tips for alleviating your predicament:

- For at least two to three hours before bedtime, don't drink alcohol or take sleeping pills, antihistamines, or tranquilizers. They depress the central nervous system and make your tongue floppy and throat muscles loose.
- Add some humidity to your bedroom. A dry throat tends to vibrate more than one that's moist. Try putting a container of water near your radiator.
- Use extra pillows to raise your head and align your airway.
- Try not to eat dairy products before bedtime because some people notice a build-up of mucus that can interfere with breathing.
- Try taking honey (chew honeycomb or swallow a couple of spoonfuls of liquid) daily for a few weeks.
- Have someone you sleep with, or your roommate, roll you over onto your side when you start to snore.
- Sew an object (i.e., a tennis ball) into the pajama top near the small of your back in order to

make it uncomfortable to sleep on your back.

As you may know, good quality sleep helps us feel rested, keeps up our energy, reduces stress levels, supports immune health, and helps us focus on our daily tasks. If snoring is or becomes a persistent problem, a visit with a health care provider can help rule out possible causes. Allergies, apnea, and other annoyances may have medical solutions that won't be fixed by the tips listed above. A little bedroom exploration and experimentation, along with a health care consultation, may help you find a snoring solution. Rest well!

Alice!

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