

DENTAL CURES FOR SNORING AND APNEA 7/27/10

Having placed dental devices for snoring and apnea for the last fifteen years, I am always amazed people don't even realize they are available. But then, many people with apnea don't even realize they have a problem. I didn't realize how prevalent the problem was until I started to make snoring appliances for patients. The results were impressive. In the beginning, the appliances were not believe to have any effect on apnea, only snoring. Since then they have become an accepted standard of treatment for mild to moderate sleep apnea, and recognized as more effective than surgery.

There are many clues to determine if you might have sleep apnea, but if you are chronically tired or you know you are a loud snorer, you are likely to have sleep apnea. Several good websites list many possible symptoms, or call our office. If you have a sleep lab done (your dentist can also refer you for this), you will know how severe the problem is, likely treatment outcomes, and some basis for measuring success. If you are diagnosed with sleep apnea your insurance will usually cover treatment, which can vary from a few hundred to a thousand dollars for custom-fit dental appliances.

Most appliances (there are many types) are designed to move the lower jaw (and tongue) forward and "open" the airway, the main problem in obstructive sleep apnea. Less expensive over-the-counter remedies have helped some people, and they range upward from there. One important consideration is evaluation of your problem. Some factors, such as sleeping on your side (as opposed to stomach or back), nasal obstructions, or severe gag reflexes may compromise effectiveness.

In our office we start with a less-expensive custom device that works well for most people, and if that does not work for you, you can trade it in for a more complicated appliance.

So see your dentist for a good night's sleep and better health.