

Oral Appliance Therapy for Snoring and Sleep Apnea

Snoring and sleep apnea are common conditions seen in men and women of all ages. It can affect the quality of sleep, disrupt the sleep of other family members, and cause daytime sleepiness and drowsiness. One type of treatment that is gaining in use is specialized oral devices that are worn in the mouth during sleep. They help to keep the airway open and control the snoring and apnea. Most of these devices hold the lower jaw forward, and slightly open, to help keep the tongue from falling back and blocking the airway during sleep.

There are a few side effects that can occur, such as mild temporary tooth or gum soreness, excessive salivation or dry mouth. A small percentage of patients can have long term changes in their jaw position or bite.

The oral appliances are most effective in cases of snoring or mild apnea. While they are effective in some cases of moderate or severe apnea, the results are less predictable.

Prior to the fabrication of an oral appliance for snoring or sleep apnea, you will first have a consultation to evaluate your oral condition as well as to discuss possible choices of treatment. If you require major dental restorations such as replacement of old fillings, crowns or gum therapy, these procedures must be completed before the appliance is made.

Once a patient is deemed to be a suitable candidate and is ready to proceed, impressions and bite measurements are made and sent to a special laboratory. Approximately 2½ weeks later, the device is fitted and we give detailed instructions on how to use and care for the device. We then follow you for the next several weeks to be sure the device is working effectively. We will refer you back to your medical sleep professional for follow up testing with the oral appliance.

When you come to your consultation appointment, please bring any recent dental panoramic x-rays from your dentist. If none is available, we can take it at our office. Please call your sleep laboratory to have a copy of your sleep study faxed to our office (314) 569-1645.

Fees and Insurance: The fee for this treatment depends on which device we feel is suitable for your use. We will be happy to discuss this with you at your initial consultation visit. The fee for this treatment may be covered by medical insurance. We are happy to submit to your medical insurance carrier for reimbursement, but we ask that patients pay for their device in full prior to delivery of the device. Your insurance will then reimburse you directly at the prevailing rate based on your policy.