

# If You Snoozzzze... YOU MAY LOSE!

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We're all familiar with "the elbow". That's what a woman uses to kick her man out of bed when he snores like a freight train! In fact, the average bed partner loses nearly one hour of sleep every night. As it turns out, loud snoring may be an indicator of a much greater problem.

We all share the common goals of good health, high energy, vitality, and slowing the aging process. Recent scientific research shows that a high percentage of the medical concerns that negatively affect our health are related to one common factor: **chronic inflammation**. Inflammation is a response of our bodies to insults and injuries. Controlling the multiple sources of chronic inflammation is key to enjoying our health goals.

Sleep apnea is a common inflammatory disorder that is caused by breathing problems during sleep. It can be associated with several possible signs which may include:

- Loud snoring
- Breathing stoppage (apnea)
- Gasping for breath during sleep
- Daytime sleepiness
- Poor concentration
- Depression
- High blood pressure
- Gastric reflux
- Heartburn
- Cardiac arrhythmia
- Type 2 diabetes
- Weight gain
- Heart attacks
- Strokes
- Organ failure

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Sleep apnea produces a viscous cycle of events during sleep. Once asleep, the tongue and soft palate may fall to the back of the throat. Snoring is created by soft tissue vibration against the back of the partially blocked airway. Breathing may stop altogether if a sleep apnea event occurs. This will cause a drop in oxygen flow to the lungs, bloodstream, and organs. The brain, sensing this change, will stimulate the release of stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline, into the bloodstream, causing the heart rate to increase. This leads to an unconscious arousal from sleep. Momentarily, breathing

becomes normal again. But as deeper sleep is resumed, the cycle of snoring, sleep apnea, stress hormone release, heart stimulation, and arousal repeat throughout the night. This is a dangerous sleep pattern resulting in body-wide inflammation. Think of this inflammation as a smoldering “fire” spreading throughout the body.

Sleep apnea is one of the most serious causes of generalized inflammation, due to chronically high levels of stress hormones in the bloodstream. It is also one of the most frequently undiagnosed causes of systemic inflammation and chronic poor health.

Fortunately, sleep apnea can be easily screened, readily diagnosed, and effectively treated. Anyone who snores should be screened with a simple overnight home monitor.

In cases of snoring and mild to moderate sleep apnea, dental appliances have proven to be very effective in opening the airway. As a Dentist, DeWitt C. Wilkerson D.M.D. evaluates and treats many people for snoring and sleep apnea with both simplicity and effectiveness. He also works very closely with our local physicians who specialize in the multiple causes of sleep disordered breathing.



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It's high time to get couples back in the same bedroom by addressing “the elephant in the room”! It's time to rekindle greater intimacy by extinguishing the fire of snoring and sleep apnea. If you or a loved one demonstrate any of the signs or symptoms described above, a screening evaluation is highly recommended. Dr. Wilkerson's team is readily available to assist you by simply contacting them for a complimentary 15-minute screening.

Here's to a shared healthy future!

Many thanks to my dear friend and therapist Lisa Chase, and the Back 2 Normal team. Your commitment to eliminating the ill effects of chronic inflammation has helped so many of us experience a much better quality of life. You're the best!



***We thank Dr. Wilkerson for contributing this edition of our Back 2 Normal monthly topic.***

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