

A Conversation Guide:

How to talk to your partner about their snoring



Did you know that snoring is the cause of frequent arguments between couples over 50?

Having a partner who snores once in a while, may be a slight inconvenience (one of many!). However, a partner who snores every night can disrupt your quality of life. You may feel tired during the day, unable to concentrate on daily activities, and you may find yourself dozing off at unconventional times. Regular sleep deprivation can eventually lead to frustration, anger and resentment toward your partner.

Your bed partner's snoring is just as much their problem, as it is yours! Maybe you've considered ear plugs, sleeping in a different room, or even suggested folkloric "home remedies". But, none of these will provide a lasting solution.

Sleep apnea may be an explanation for your partner's snoring and, left untreated, this condition increases the risk of chronic illnesses such as hypertension, stroke, diabetes... The aim of sleep apnea treatment is to improve their (and your!) quality of life, offering long-term health benefits. But, how do you bring up the sensitive topic of snoring?

Snorers are often embarrassed when confronted about their snoring. They may become defensive because they feel powerless to do anything about it. You may also feel selfish about broaching the subject. All good reasons to put off the discussion.

How should you broach the subject of snoring?

1. Choose a quiet moment, listen carefully and adopt a supportive attitude.
2. Start by describing your daytime tiredness and your concerns about each other's ability to get a good night's sleep because of snoring. Let your partner know that you care about his or her wellbeing and that you are concerned about the risks of poor sleep. It's important to reassure your partner that snoring doesn't change the way you feel about them.
3. Pay close attention to your partner's reactions. You'll need to consider the stigma associated with snoring.
4. There are many possible reasons for snoring, one of which is sleep apnea. Discuss sleep apnoea by opening up a dialogue and identifying your partner's concerns about seeking medical advice.

Your partner may worry about the stigma associated with the condition, be nervous about the idea of surgery as a potential treatment or fear the diagnosis of other health problems. By showing empathy, you can help them get the treatment they need.

5. Your partner may be taking in a lot of new information, so give them time to digest it and let them know that you want to support them in getting treatment. You'll be able to strengthen your relationship and get a good night's sleep at the same time!

A few tips to make open conversation easier.

The type of language you use can make all the difference.

Supportive language

"I care about you and your health. I have noticed that your snoring is loud [present evidence] and I've been reading about the long-term effects of snoring and sleep apnea.

I will share the information with you and I'd love for you to make an appointment to see a doctor."

"I would like to share this information with you. Would you be willing to take an online sleep apnoea test?"

"I'd like you to make an appointment with a doctor."

Discouraging Language

"I can't sleep because of you!"

"Your snoring is driving me crazy/crazy. Don't you care about me".