



THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Is Snoring Keeping You Awake?

"I must confess I was pretty skeptical; however after 3 days, my wife said my "snoring" was gone."

Do you Snore? You might say "never" or, "maybe" or, "How would I know, I'm asleep." If we asked your mate, they will definitely have the answer. My wife says I am a puffer. Kind of a ... (puff a few times) is that annoying? But even as a puffer, sometimes I keep my wife awake because she is such a light sleeper. So as innocuous as a little puffing may seem, it can cause some serious discomfort in your mate's sleep and ultimately how they function the next day. But let's look at snoring as one of the clues we can use to identify the need to live a healthier lifestyle.

A September 2008, study in the journal "Sleep" showed "Heavy snoring to be an independent risk factor for early carotid atherosclerosis. The study is rather technical but here's



the short version. 110 people were categorized as mild, moderate, or heavy snorers in a sleep laboratory. Two researchers were blinded to the snoring history of each subject and listened to a sound signal from a room microphone. Each individual snore was manually scored and a snore index was created based on snores per hour of sleep.

Participants were placed into one of 3 groups: 0-

25% was defined as no snoring to mild snoring; 25-50%, moderate snoring; more than 50%, heavy snoring. Here's what the authors had to say about heavy snoring: "Our data clearly demonstrates that heavy snoring is an independent risk factor for early carotid atherosclerosis which may progress to be associated with the development of stroke, representing a major cause of morbidity and mortality."

This is a transcript from a "video magazine" we send out each week called the Wellness Minute, if you're not getting our Wellness Minute videos each week, sign up at the front desk

You might be thinking, could my snoring or my spouse's snoring be that serious? What about mild snoring? Should I be concerned? Hey, we are the baby boomers; we want to function at peak mental capacity. Snoring may be the motivation for you or your spouse to finally decide to get healthy, real healthy.

Let's face it, nobody wants to change. But if the carrot is big enough, all of us will travel in uncharted waters. The risk of atherosclerotic plague, compromised healthy brain function, and possible stroke as well as the behavioral and interpersonal issues of snoring may be strong enough reason to take action.

So what are some of the natural things you can do to help reduce snoring? From a physical therapy point of view, anything that can increase muscle control in the throat and soft palate will help. Singing, especially employing throat warm-up exercises used by professional singers, will strengthen lax muscles. Done 30 minutes a day, throat exercises can be a cost-effective snore-reducer for people and even help mild to moderate sleep apnea.

From a nutritional point of view, a friend and colleague Dr. Brian Sandborn shared with me a little remedy. To reduce snoring, try taking L-Carnitine. He uses one tsp which is 3 grams of L-Carnitine before bed.



L-Carnitine has many functions, but one of its principle roles is to mobilize fat. The word picture that I like is that Carnitine is like a fork lift carrying fat into the energy part of the cell called the mitochondria where the fat can be burned.

I decided to try it for my puffing. Because it is tart, I tried mixing it with about 3 ounces of fruit juice and 6 ounces of water. I must confess I was pretty skeptical; however after 3 days, my wife said my puffing was gone. Being the typical patient however, after it was gone for a week,

I stopped the regiment.

I just saw Dr. Sandborn a few weeks ago and he reminded me that Carnitine is made from Lysine if adequate vitamin C is present. So whenever you supplement with Carnitine, make sure you are getting sufficient vitamin C.

L-Carnitine and vitamin C is just one strategy. Ask your Wellness professional about L-Carnitine and other ways to reduce snoring. But remember, therapies that work for one person may not work as well for another. We are all biochemically unique. That's why your Wellness clinician is so valuable. Your clinician can help you assess strategies that work for you. Ask for help. Your spouse will sleep better, you'll reduce serious risk factors, and you'll be healthier.