

Oral Appliances Can Manage Snoring and Sleep Apnea

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Many people still don't realize that snoring and sleep apnea can often be well managed by the use of an "oral appliance". It's a device that fits in your mouth to control the position of the tongue in relationship to the throat.

Understand your choices. There are some "one-size-fits-all" oral appliances promoted in the news and in dental journals. And, there are ads for self-fitting mouth pieces. Most people understand that to get the best results requires the expertise of a trained and skilled professional. One-size-fits-all, and doing the fitting yourself are unlikely to give you optimal results.

If one type and style of oral appliance would benefit everyone, that would be great. But the fact is, there are over 150 of them. They vary in how they work (type) and vary in how they fit and function (design).

Two Types of Oral Appliances

- 1) Tongue retaining device (TRD), which directly holds the tongue a little forward, and,
- 2) Mandibular (lower jaw) repositioning device (MRD), which indirectly holds the lower jaw forward, so that the tongue is moved forward.

The specific TRDs and MRDs are patented according to specific design variations based on how they fit and function.

Why are there so many variations?

Individuals are unique in the exact way their jaws and tongues move, and the shape and size of their teeth, jaws, tongue, and throat. This affects the decision as to what type and style of oral appliance should be utilized, and how it may need to be further customized.

The inappropriate choice of an appliance can result in ineffective treatment of sleep apnea and reduction or cessation of snoring. It can also lead to unwanted, unfavorable side effects as:

- Jaw joint pain
- Jaw muscle pain
- Loosening of individual teeth
- Repositioning of individual teeth
- Permanent protrusion of the lower jaw

Successful treatment is best defined as:

- Maximum effective treatment of the condition
- User-friendly, so it is used daily
- Minimal unwanted side effects

An appropriate oral device will be comfortable to wear, easy to place and remove, easy to change its settings (when appropriate), easy to clean and, most importantly, effective.

If you snore, been diagnosed with sleep apnea, grind your teeth, or have TMJ problems, an oral appliance may be of help to you, or someone you know. The above information is intended to assist you in your process of seeking and obtaining professional care. These are a serious problems so don't hesitate – get help today.