



absolute dentistry

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Snoring: A Nuisance or Symptom of Sleep Apnea?

Snoring may be more than a nuisance; it could be a symptom of a serious problem called Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). OSA can lead to high blood pressure and a higher risk of heart disease. Sleep interrupted by OSA can also cause daytime drowsiness that leads to accidents.

What is OSA? OSA causes the muscles of the throat and tongue to relax and sag during sleep, obstructing and sometimes collapsing the airway and completely blocking breathing. People with OSA stop breathing for 10 seconds or longer, as often as 30 to 300 times during the night and may spend up to half their sleep time with below-normal oxygen levels. The periods of obstructed breathing cause the heart to work harder and may be accompanied by irregular heart beats, high blood pressure, and may lead to heart disease.

General Treatment for Snoring: Simple lifestyle changes may help reduce snoring:

- ☺ Get more exercise, and diet if you are overweight
- ☺ Avoid drinking alcohol three hours prior to bedtime
- ☺ Avoid tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and antihistamines at bedtime. Take only doctor-prescribed medications
- ☺ Establish a regular sleep schedule; don't get overtired
- ☺ Sleep on your side, not your back
- ☺ Take decongestants when you have a cold; see a doctor if nasal congestion persists

Treatments for OSA: In addition to the above lifestyle changes, some cases may require further treatment. Drs. Brown and Kushner can help with the diagnosis and treatment of OSA. Dental appliances that help keep the airway open during sleep have been very successful in the treatment of both snoring and OSA.

Nasal Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) therapy may be indicated. IN CPAP, the patient wears a mask over his/her nose while sleeping to keep the airway open using a compressor that gently forces air through the nasal passages. In extreme cases, surgery may be needed

Take the sleep quiz on the other side of this newsletter. If you snore or suspect you may have OSA, be sure to discuss this with Dr. Brown or Kushner on your next visit to our office.



Meet our Staff



We all want the best possible dental care, and the most perfect smile that dentistry can provide. Few of us, however, want to deal with the cost of that dental care or with the insurance companies that may pay for it.

That is the role of Sloane, our Treatment Coordinator. She collects all the information from the dentist and the insurance company, then helps patients determine the best way to use their dental benefits. Then, when they come in for treatment, patients can focus on their time with the doctor, not on doing paperwork. Says Sloane, "It's my job to make the bad news sting a little less."

Sloane went to school to become a dental assistant. However, when she was referred to Drs. Brown and Kushner, they needed someone to work in the front office. She tried it, liked the work, and has been doing front-office work here for eight and a half years. Sloane says "It's easy to work with people you believe in." She particularly enjoys seeing the transformation of our patients' smiles as they complete their treatment plans.

Sloane is an avid traveler. She visits family in New York several times each year. In addition, for 2005, she has planned trips to Australia/New Zealand and to Costa Rica. She also enjoys watching movies and going to live concerts - any kind of music from rock to classical.

If you miss seeing Sloane next time you are in the office, it may be because she is now working with us only part-time, while pursuing an additional career doing voice-overs for radio and TV ads. To check out the voice that goes with that beautiful smile, try calling our office after hours.



In the Next Issue...

With all the progress that has been made in preventive dentistry, we now can focus some of our resources on improving smiles - on making patients feel good about how they look. In the next issue of *absolute dentistry*, we will tell you about some advances in cosmetic dentistry.



An Ounce of Prevention...

Just a small cavity in a child's tooth, although relatively inexpensive and easy to fill, can cost thousands of dollars to maintain over that child's lifetime. The Data and Analysis Center, a claims-based dental health data warehouse, reports that the "average cost to maintain a restored cavity in the molar of a 10 year old reaches \$2,187 by the time that child reaches the age of 79. Imagine the cost of maintaining multiple restorations!

To date, there are no permanent materials to restore cavities. Fillings simply wear out over time. Future costs/procedures may be as minor as replacing the filling, or as major and expensive as endodontic treatment and/or replacing the filling with a crown.

With good oral hygiene practices and regular dental checkups, cavities today are almost completely preventable. Most preventive dental care is covered by insurance, thereby costing the patient very little. Why not take advantage of that to prevent cavities and save your child a great deal of money and dental work in the future?

If it has been more than six months since your child has had a dental checkup, call Dr. Brown or Dr. Kushner today at **949.833.8020** to schedule an appointment.



Sleep Quiz

Answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Discuss the questions with family members and co-workers, as they may be the first to recognize any of these signs. If one or more of the following describes you, be sure to discuss sleep apnea at your next dental visit.

- ✓ I have been told that I snore.
- ✓ I have been told that I snore loudly, every night, in all positions.
- ✓ I have been told that I stop breathing while I sleep.
- ✓ I wake up feeling tired, even after a full night's sleep.
- ✓ I have high blood pressure.
- ✓ I often wake up with a headache.
- ✓ I have trouble concentrating.
- ✓ I have become unusually forgetful.
- ✓ People say, or I feel, I have become uncharacteristically irritable, anxious, or depressed.
- ✓ I have been jolted awake, gasping for breath during the night.
- ✓ I fall asleep at inappropriate times during the day, like while I am driving or in a meeting.
- ✓ I am overweight.
- ✓ I seem to have lost my sex drive.

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Courtesy of

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